

Expanded child care funding, spaces and services ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

News release in html ^[2]

Text of the news release:

Nova Scotian families will have new child-care options through the province's new Early Learning Child Care Plan.

The 10-year plan will create about 1,000 licensed child-care spaces and 550 portable subsidy spaces, open up home-based day care and increase opportunities for infant care and children with special needs.

The Nova Scotia plan, worth more than \$130 million, was announced at the Leeds Street Child Care Centre in Halifax today, May 8, by Community Services Minister David Morse.

The two-years of Early Learning and Child Care federal funding of \$39.4 million, plus new provincial funding and existing federal funding will be used to enhance this investment.

"Quality day care provides the best possible start in life for children of working parents," said Mr. Morse. "This plan will provide more options to families in rural areas as well as our cities and larger communities."

To address the needs of Nova Scotia families and the child-care sector, the plan will provide \$39.4 million to programs supporting regulated child care. In addition to providing 1,000 more child-care spaces, the plan will increase infant care spaces from four per cent to six per cent -- creating spaces for about 200 infants. Operational funding to licensed facilities will be enhanced and streamlined. Funding will also be available for repairs and renovations, energy, and accessibility upgrades.

"This plan will provide a foundation for Nova Scotia to continue to build on," said Elaine Ferguson, executive director of Child Care Connections Nova Scotia. "It is reflective of the many voices heard over the past year of consultation between the sector and the Department of Community Services."

Licensed family home child care will be expanded. That will increase the availability, particularly in rural areas where regulated child care may be limited, and can provide flexible operating hours to help parents who have irregular schedules.

Subsidized portable spaces will increase by 550 over the next five years -- increasing the total number of subsidized spaces to 3,430.

The plan will also:

- Increase spaces for children with special needs from about four per cent to eight per cent, which is about 530 spaces;
- Provide funding to develop online learning opportunities to enable early childhood educators in rural and remote communities the same access to early childhood development programs as people in urban settings;
- Keep parents better informed and streamline processes by making information like subsidy application forms and user-friendly child development material accessible on the department's website.

[The original plan, proposed by the former federal Liberals, would have allowed the province to create twice as many day-care spaces. (SOURCE: CBC Nova Scotia, May 8 2006. See full CBC article ^{[3].})]

Region: Nova Scotia ^[4]

Canada ^[5]

Tags: subsidy ^[6]

funding ^[7]

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