

Canada's child care advocacy organization congratulates Ontario for free child care plan ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Canada's national child care advocacy organization congratulated the Ontario government for its **ground-breaking commitment** ^[3] to put in place by 2020 a system of free licensed child care for preschoolers starting at age 2 ½ until they start kindergarten.

"We are jumping up and down at the news and parents with young children in Ontario are no doubt doing the same," said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now (formerly the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada).

"What is especially exciting is the government is proposing to eliminate parent fees for preschoolers by funding programs directly and at a high enough level to properly compensate childhood educators working in those programs through the implementation of a provincial wage grid," Ballantyne added.

Ballantyne said she is pleased that the Ontario government is also taking steps to making child care for infants and toddlers more affordable and accessible to low and moderate-income families but noted that it will be important to move to a fully-funded universal system for all age groups as the next big step.

"We've always said that it is going to take time to build the kind of child care system parents and children need and that is especially true when it comes to infant and toddler programs because there are so few in number at this time," Ballantyne explained.

Child Care Now said that today's announcement by the Ontario government, coupled with the British Columbia government's plans for significant reform to its provincial child care system, puts even more pressure on the federal government to step up its own financial commitments.

"Now more than ever, the Government of Canada must take action both to help finance provincial and territorial child care initiatives, and to use its spending power to make sure that we don't end up with large inequities with respect to access, quality and affordability from one province or territory to another," said Ballantyne.

The 2018 federal budget was roundly criticized for not increasing the government's annual allocation of under \$550 million for child care across the country. Child Care Now recommended spending to increase to \$1 billion in 2018 and a further \$1 billion each following year until public spending on child care reaches 1% of GDP, the accepted international benchmark for a country's annual spending on early learning and child care.

-reprinted from Child Care Now

Related link: More child care, more choice: Providing free preschool child care for children aged 2.5 to kindergarten ^[4]

Region: Ontario ^[5]

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