

Ontario announces free child care for pre-schoolers ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Multiple documents included, links embedded

Overview

The Premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne has announced that full-day licensed child care will become free for preschool children from the age of two-and-a-half until they are eligible to start kindergarten, beginning in 2020. The announcement preceded the provincial budget, which allocates \$2.2 billion over three years and is based on an affordability report produced by Dr. Gordon Cleveland, economist at the University of Toronto Scarborough.

It is estimated that 40,000 primary caregivers would enter into full-time employment as a result of the policy, aligning it with the government's goal to close the gender wage gap and remove barriers for parents (especially women) to access/benefit from work. The policy would also build on the seven priorities set out in Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework; importantly, increasing accessibility and affordability of child care in the province.

This page presents selected government materials, organizational responses to the announcement, and associated news coverage. We will continue to update the page as information regarding budget details and new developments become available.

Government documents

More child care, more choice: Providing free preschool child care for children aged 2.5 to kindergarten ^[2]

Full press release

Affordable for all: Making licensed child care affordable in Ontario ^[3]

Affordability report by Dr. Gordon Cleveland

Ontario's Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework ^[4]

Organizational responses

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care ^[5]

"This is a victory for advocacy efforts over the decades. Our coalition of parents, child care programs, women's groups, unions and social justice advocates have called for 'affordable' child care for many years. This commitment to no-fee child care for preschoolers in Ontario - which is the model of choice in many countries- will truly be a game-changer both for families and for Canada."

Laurel Rothman, Interim Coordinator of Public Policy, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Child Care Now ^[6]

"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."

Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now (formerly Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada)

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario ^[7]

"High-quality early years education for children begins and ends with well-educated, well-compensated and passionate early childhood educators (ECEs)...By establishing a provincial wage scale supported with appropriate public funding Ontario can recruit and retain qualified early childhood educators who will be better able to build stable and fulfilling careers in the early years and child care sector."

Lyndsay Macdonald, RECE and Coordinator of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) ^[8]

"We have serious concerns that the government has made no assurances that the funding will only go to public not-for-profit child care centres. Every cent of funding should be used to provide care and not used to subsidise profits for privatized child care centres."

Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, Chair of CUPE's Social Service Sector

News coverage

Architect of Wynne's new child care plan ^[9]

Metro Morning, 28 March 2018

Ontario budget to fund free child care for preschoolers as part of \$2.2B plan ^[10]

Toronto Star, 27 March 2018

Ontario Liberals offer government-funded child care ahead of election ^[11]

The Globe and Mail, 27 March 2018

Ontario Liberals promise free daycare for preschool children ^[12]

CBC News, 27 March 2018

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