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Excerpts from the press release:

Beginning on Sept. 1, more New Brunswick parents will be eligible for funding under the Day Care Assistance Program to access affordable and quality child care.

The provincial government reminds parents that significant enhancements have been made to the Day Care Assistance Program. First, the family income threshold for a full day care subsidy has been raised from \$15,000 to \$22,000 yearly net family income. The government also increased the subsidy rate to \$22 per day for children under the age of two, \$20 per day for children over the age of two; and \$10.75 per day for after-school children. All these changes come into effect on Sept. 1, 2004.

"We believe these enhancements will lighten the financial load for numerous working families," Premier Bernard Lord said. "These changes may represent hundreds of dollars more in assistance per month for eligible parents."

The Day Care Assistance Program is part of the New Brunswick's investments under the Early Learning and Child Care agreement. Of the \$8 million dedicated to this program, \$6.3 million comes from the provincial government and \$1.7 million from the federal government. There are 382 licensed day care facilities in New Brunswick offering close to 12,000 spaces.

"Up to now, 1,700 families have benefited from the Day Care Assistance Program for licensed day care facilities," Family and Community Services Minister Tony Huntjens said. "With these changes, we expect to double this number within four years." **Region: Canada**

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