

Universal child care program details released ^[1]

Starting on April 1, families will save up to \$700 per month per child registered in participating licensed full-time child care programs, the Yukon government said Monday.

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Source: Whitehorse Daily Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 9 Mar 2021

AVAILABILITY

[Access online](#) ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Starting on April 1, families will save up to \$700 per month per child registered in participating licensed full-time child care programs, the Yukon government said Monday.

For example, if a family pays \$850 per month, it would pay \$150 in fees starting next month.

Children in part-time programs will receive a pro-rated fee reduction.

“To support Yukon families and make their lives more affordable, the Government of Yukon is investing more than \$25 million in 2021-22 towards early learning and child care initiatives,” the government said in a statement.

“This includes approximately \$15 million for a new Yukon-wide universal child care program.”

The funding is included in the \$1.8-billion territorial budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year tabled in the legislature last Thursday.

Licensed child care operators who opt into the new universal child care program will receive additional funding from the government, which will benefit families through reduced monthly fees.

Operators who choose to participate in the program will also benefit from enhanced funding for operations and wages for early childhood educators.

Existing subsidies such as the teen parent grant and the grandparent grant will continue to be provided.

“Introducing universal affordable child care in Yukon will put more disposable income into the hands of families and create more choices for those who want to work outside the home,” said Health and Social Services Minister Pauline Frost.

“This will save families up to \$700 per month per child, helping to build a stronger economy and support Yukon children to grow into healthy, happy adults.”

“Our government believes that all families should have access to affordable, high-quality child care and early learning opportunities,” added Education Minister Tracy-Anne McPhee.

“Early childhood educators play a key role in setting up our children for success in school and life, and it is important that we recognize and support them. By investing in families and education, we are creating healthy, thriving communities.”

In July 2020, Premier Sandy Silver announced the Yukon would be moving to a universal, affordable child care system.

In 2018 and 2019, the government consulted First Nations governments, child care operators, early childhood educators, families and stakeholders in the child care sector to better understand the needs of children and families in their communities.

Using information from past Yukon engagements, a team from Health and Social Services and Education has been working with Yukon First Nations governments and key stakeholders, including child care operators and education partners, over the past few months, to determine how to create a universal childcare model for the Yukon based on the principles of affordability, accessibility and quality, the government said.

On April 1, the Child Care Unit will move to the Department of Education and become the Early Learning and Child Care Unit to help ensure that early learning and childcare services are co-ordinated at all levels.

“The integration of early childhood development programs and education will help create a learning continuum that begins at birth and supports individuals throughout their learning journey,” the government said.

McPhee tabled amendments to the Child Care Act on Monday.

They also address one of the recommendations in Putting People First, the final report on the comprehensive review of health and social services, to align learning programs and services under one department.

“The establishment of the Early Learning and Child Care Unit in the Department Education would help ensure that early learning and child care services are co-ordinated at all levels, including the transition into kindergarten and primary school,” McPhee said.

Region: Yukon Territory ^[3]

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