

\$10 a day child care for Canadian families^[1]

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Too many families in Canada lack access to affordable, inclusive, and high-quality child care. This is an economic issue as much as it is a social one. Without access to child care, parents – especially women – cannot fully participate in the economy, and the global COVID-19 pandemic has brought these issues to the forefront. As part of our commitment to support a recovery that brings all Canadians along, the Government of Canada wants to ensure that quality and affordable regulated child care spaces are available to all families who need it.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today highlighted that Budget 2021 sets a goal of on average \$10 a day child care within the next five years. By building an early learning and child care system, we will make life more affordable for Canadian families, create new jobs, grow the middle class, increase women's participation in the work force, and drive strong economic growth across the country.

The federal government will work with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners to build this Canada-wide, community-based early learning and child care system. The government will invest \$30 billion over the next five years, with a minimum of \$9.2 billion per year ongoing. By the end of 2022, this new system would reduce fees for parents with children in regulated child care by 50 per cent on average, everywhere outside of Quebec. While Quebec already has shown leadership through a child care system where prices are affordable, they will still receive their share of the funding to allow for further improvements to their system. The Government of Canada will also work with provinces and territories to help ensure that early childhood educators are provided with the training and development opportunities needed to support their growth and the growth of a child care system that works for all Canadians.

This investment builds on the work the government has been doing to make life more affordable for families and give children the best start in life. Programs like the Canada Child Benefit, which puts money directly in the pockets of parents to help with the added expenses of raising a family, have already been supporting those who need it the most. However, with child care expenses running nearly as high as rent or mortgage payments in some cities across the country, we know that more needs to be done. This investment will create new opportunities for Canadian families and allow parents, particularly mothers, to get back into the workforce.

Establishing a Canada-wide early learning and child care system will create jobs and economic growth, increase women's participation in the workforce, and offer each child in Canada a better start in life. This is part of our plan to grow the middle class and help people working hard to join it.

Quotes

“Without child care, Canadian parents can't work. Today's announcement is as much about meeting their needs as it is about setting our children up for success for generations to come. Investing in early child learning and establishing Canada-wide child care will make life more affordable for families, create jobs, strengthen our economy, get women back into the workforce, and grow the middle class. We will get it done.”

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

“COVID-19 has brutally exposed something women have long known: Without child care, parents – usually mothers – can't work. The closing of our schools and child care drove women's participation in the labour force down to its lowest level in more than two decades. There is agreement, across the political spectrum, that early learning and child care is the national economic policy we need now. This is social infrastructure that will drive jobs and growth. This is feminist economic policy. This is smart economic policy.”

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

“Child care is not a luxury, it’s a necessity. The past year has made it abundantly clear that we need affordable, accessible, inclusive, and high-quality child care, and we need it now. Leaders in the private, social, and labour sectors all agree that a Canada-wide early learning and child care system will drive economic growth, help women get back into the workforce, and give every child across Canada the best start in life. Together, I know we can get this done.”

The Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

Quick Facts

- Throughout the pandemic, women’s participation in the workforce has been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and public health restrictions, in part because they are the main providers of family care, including home schooling and caring for family members.
- COVID-19 has also had a particular impact on the labour force participation of racialized women with young children. For example, under 76 per cent of Black mothers with a child younger than six were active in the labour market in January 2021, compared to over 81 per cent of mothers who did not identify as visible minorities.
- Investments in child care will benefit all Canadians. Studies show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between \$1.50 and \$2.80 in return.
- As part of \$30 billion in funding, and building on Canada’s Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care framework co-developed in 2018, Budget 2021 proposes to invest up to \$2.5 billion over the next five years:
- \$1.4 billion over five years, starting in 2021-22, to create up to 3,300 new high-quality early learning and child care spaces for Indigenous families
 - \$515 million over five years, starting in 2021-22, to support before- and after-school care for First Nations children on reserve
 - \$264 million over four years, starting in 2022-23, to repair and renovate existing Indigenous early-learning and child care centres
 - \$420 million over three years, starting in 2023-24, to build and maintain new early-learning and child care centres in additional communities.
- Budget 2021 also builds on the approximately 40,000 new spaces already created through previous federal investments.
- To make immediate progress for children with disabilities, Budget 2021 proposes to provide \$29.2 million over two years, starting in 2021-22, to Employment and Social Development Canada through the Enabling Accessibility Fund to support child care centres as they improve their physical accessibility.
- Combined with previous investments announced since 2015, a minimum of \$9.2 billion per year ongoing will be invested in child care, including Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care, starting in 2025-26.
- To better support Canadian communities and families, especially those most in need, Budgets 2016 and 2017 provided federal investments totalling \$7.5 billion over 11 years to support and create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country.
- As part of the Fall Economic Statement, the Government of Canada reconfirmed its commitment to create a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system, beginning with a federal secretariat to support this work, new investments to support early childhood educators and making the early learning and child care investments announced in Budgets 2016 and 2017 permanent, and additional investments for Indigenous early learning and child care.
- In 2016, the Government of Canada introduced the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), a simpler, tax-free, and more generous child benefit better targeted to those who need it most. The CCB is a monthly payment made to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.

Related link: Budget 2021: A recovery plan for jobs, growth, and resilience [3]

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national child care system [6]

mother's labour force participation [7]

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