

How the federal budget will help childcare in Manitoba ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

WINNIPEG -- The federal government released its 2021 budget on Monday, pledging \$30 billion over the next five years in childcare funding so provinces can create spaces and lower fees.

The Liberals' plan aims to see an average drop in fees next year by 50 per cent for preschool daycare spaces, with the ultimate goal of having an average fee of \$10 a day across the country, with the exception of Quebec, which has its own system.

Jodie Kehl, with the Manitoba Child Care Association, said it's an exciting week for child care in Canada.

"It's definitely been historical to see this type of unprecedented level of investment," she said.

"So \$30 billion over the next five years, which will start to really lay the foundation for a universal, affordable, inclusive childcare system in our country, with parallel funding for an Indigenous early-learning framework as well."

Though Kehl said the investment is monumental, she noted it's only a first step in creating a more affordable childcare system.

"What we're seeing from our federal government is that this is an investment into building a system," she said.

She added that supply-side funding will be essential in building a national childcare system that Canadian families want and deserve.

A three-legged stool

To describe Manitoba's childcare system, Kehl used the analogy of a three-legged stool, with the three legs being affordability, accessibility and quality.

"All three of those legs are quite precarious in keeping that stool up," she said.

Kehl said affordability is essential so families can pay for childcare. She said accessibility is important because "childcare is no good if you don't have a space to take your child."

Kehl noted that at the heart of quality is the workforce.

"All three of the legs of that stool need to be invested in, so the stool can be grounded and have a foundation that the Manitoba children and families deserve, to have a quality childcare system in our province," she said.

Questions remain

Kehl said there are still many lingering questions about the investment and details that still need to be worked out, noting the plan has a future objective of reaching a 50/50 cost share with provinces and territories.

"We're anticipating that our provincial government will align with this monumental shift," she said.

"We can't see why any province wouldn't want to be apart of this historical movement to support children and families in our country."

Kehl said throughout the pandemic, the governments have been emphasizing the importance of childcare, adding that the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women.

"This is the answer to make that pivot, to turn our backs on COVID, to actually get more women back into the workforce and have a support for women and families, both in our province and in our country," she said.

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: federal budget ^[4]
system ^[5]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/04/how-federal-budget-will-help-childcare-manitoba> [2] https://beta.ctvnews.ca/local/winnipeg/2021/4/23/1_5400094.html [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7857> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-budget> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/system>