

Canada announces historic first early learning and child care agreement ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

In the recent federal budget, the Government of Canada laid out a transformative plan to build a Canada-wide, community-based system of quality early learning and child care. It committed to working with provincial, territorial, and Indigenous partners to put a system in place. Today's historic first agreement, with British Columbia, is making this plan a reality in Canada.

The time for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system is now. Too many families in Canada lack access to affordable, inclusive, and high-quality child care. The global COVID-19 pandemic has also made it clear that without access to child care, parents – especially women – cannot fully participate in the economy. By building a Canada-wide early learning and child care system, the Government of Canada will make life more affordable for Canadian families and increase women's participation in the workforce, while creating new jobs and driving strong economic growth as we recover from the pandemic.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Premier of British Columbia, John Horgan, today announced an agreement that will significantly improve early learning and child care for children in the province. As part of this agreement, the Government of Canada will invest \$3.2 billion over the next five years to help improve regulated early learning and child care for children under 6 years of age in British Columbia.

Under this agreement, the governments of Canada and British Columbia will work together to improve access to quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services. British Columbia and Canada agree on the goal of \$10 a day child care, and will work together towards achieving an average parent fee of \$10 per day for all regulated child care spaces for children under 6 by the end of the five-year agreement. By the end of 2022, British Columbians will see a 50 per cent reduction in average parent fees for children under the age of 6 in regulated child care.

This agreement will lead to the creation of 30,000 new regulated early learning and child care spaces for children under the age of 6 within five years, and 40,000 spaces within seven years. These spaces will be focused on community investments that are long-term and run by public and non-profit institutions.

The agreement will fund critical services and support early childhood educators, including through the development of a wage grid.

The Government of Canada will continue to work with provinces, territories, and Indigenous partners across the country to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system that allows parents, especially mothers, the opportunity to get back into the workforce, and offers every child in Canada the best start in life. Our aim is to build a child care system that is designed from the start as inclusive, welcomes all children, and gives them an equal chance to succeed and flourish.

Quotes

"Too many parents across the country are struggling to find affordable, high-quality child care. This agreement with British Columbia is a big step forward in establishing Canada-wide child care that will make life more affordable for families, get women back into the workforce, and drive economic growth, while giving every child in Canada, no matter where they live, the chance to achieve their potential."

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

"For years, many parents in B.C. struggled to find child care. When they could find it, costs were sometimes too much to bear. The progress we've already made to fund new spaces and save families money has been life-changing. We know what it takes to build a more accessible and affordable child care system in British Columbia because it's happening right now. By working together to make \$10-a-day child care a reality for families, we're helping build a strong recovery for everyone."

— The Hon. John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia

"Ensuring all Canadians have access to high-quality and affordable early learning and child care is not just an economic issue, but also a feminist issue. Our government is working with the Government of British Columbia on putting in place the first pieces of an historic

investment in early learning and child care that has been over 50 years in the making. It's a national economic policy Canadians need now that will help our country reach its full potential, giving every child in Canada the best possible start in life, increasing women's participation in the workforce, creating jobs, making life more affordable for young families, and driving growth and prosperity for all Canadians."

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

"Child care is not a luxury, it's a necessity. The pandemic has made it abundantly clear that we need affordable, flexible, inclusive, and high-quality child care, and we need it now. Through this historic agreement, our government is working to ensure that all children and families in British Columbia have equal access to the quality early learning and child care they need to succeed."

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

"The Province of B.C.'s historic investments in child care have helped us build a strong foundation for an inclusive, universal child care system and positioned us as a leader for child care in Canada. We're proud to lead the way with the Government of Canada to deliver on our shared vision of creating the affordable, quality and inclusive child care system that B.C. families need."

—The Hon. Katrina Chen, British Columbia's Minister of State for Child Care

Quick Facts

In addition to the federal contribution, the Province of British Columbia will invest more than \$2.5 billion over the next three years in early learning and child care. This builds on \$2 billion invested by the Province through Childcare BC since 2018.

Budget 2021 provides new investments to build a high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care system across Canada. These investments total up to \$30 billion over the next five years, and combined with previous investments announced since 2015, \$9.2 billion every year, permanently.

Through previous investments in early learning and child care, the Government of Canada helped to create over 40,000 more affordable child care spaces across the country prior to the pandemic, including nearly 2,800 in British Columbia.

In addition to these investments, the Government of Canada is directly supporting parents, no matter how they choose to care for their children, through the Canada Child Benefit (CCB).

In May 2021, the government began providing additional temporary support for families with children under the age of six through the CCB young child supplement. This helps Canadian families who are struggling with a range of unpredictable expenses during the pandemic, including temporary child care arrangements.

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.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: federal budget ^[4]

federal funding ^[5]

universal system ^[6]

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