

# Federal-provincial agreement will Transform Child Care, Reduce Costs for Families <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:**

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

Excerpted from news release

A \$605 million funding agreement on child care between the provincial and federal governments will significantly reduce costs for working families and women and expand access to more quality care across Nova Scotia.

Premier Iain Rankin joined Prime Minister Justin Trudeau today, July 13, to announce the new federal funding over five years through the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

"This is historic. By next year, families will pay 50 per cent less for child care and in five years, child care will cost on average \$10 a day," said Premier Rankin. "This is a game-changer for Nova Scotia families – better care that is more affordable and accessible. A Canada-wide early learning and child care system has been talked about for decades, and I'm proud that our province is at the forefront of making this a reality for Nova Scotian families."

Nova Scotia's Early Learning and Child Care System will focus on affordability, accessibility, inclusion and quality. The plan will:

- reduce child care fees by an average of 50 per cent by Dec. 31, 2022
- ensure child care fees are, on average, \$10 per day by 2026
- create at least 9,500 new early learning and child care spaces by March 31, 2025, including new spaces for infants and toddlers, and a new three-year-old early learning program with priority access given to vulnerable and equity-seeking families
- enhance before and after care options at schools

The province will contribute \$40 million over the five-year agreement on top of current annual funding to the sector.

"All families should have access to quality, affordable child care. Today's agreement with Nova Scotia is a big step forward to making \$10 a day child care a reality across the province, and delivering much-needed support to families and communities as we build back better from the pandemic," said Prime Minister Trudeau.

The provincial government will create a new organization to manage the operations of all regulated child care in the province. Regulatory oversight will remain with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

An additional \$22.5 million in federal funding was also announced today. This includes an \$11.6 million extension of the Canada-Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Agreement for 2021-22 and a one-time \$10.9 million investment to support Nova Scotia's Excellence in Early Childhood Education workforce strategy, which will result in higher wages for early childhood educators (ECEs) and free tuition, books and bursaries for hundreds of ECEs.

"Early childhood educators are key to Nova Scotia's successful early learning and child care system, so it is important that we support them with higher wages, free training and education and a workforce strategy to ensure their continued success," said Derek Mombourquette, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. "We are reinvesting in the people who care for our children. This will not only improve the lives of our valued ECEs, it will improve the quality of care for families and children."

This strategy will address workforce issues identified by the sector and support ECEs in lifelong learning. Key initiatives include:

- providing a one-time grant of \$500 for trained ECEs who work in provincially funded child care centres
- developing a compensation framework for ECEs working in government-funded licensed child care facilities to improve pay and benefits. The new framework is expected to be completed by 2022
- supporting ECEs with career navigation support
- moving toward professional recognition by introducing a regulated certification process for ECEs
- providing free tuition and books for over 300 staff currently working in child care and pre-primary without a diploma, including designated seats for Mi'kmaq/Indigenous peoples, Black/African Nova Scotians, Acadian/francophone Nova Scotians and newcomers

- providing bursaries to 300 students currently enrolled in full-time ECE diploma/degree programs in Nova Scotia, and more for students from equity-seeking groups
- working closely with public schools to ensure they are supported to help students who are considering ECE as a career option
- establishing a post-diploma certificate training program through the Advanced Practitioner Program in Early Childhood Education, allowing qualified ECEs to specialize and advance in a particular area of practice

#### Quotes:

Child care is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Our vision for early learning and child care is big and ambitious, but I have confidence in us to get it done. Today's historic agreement with Nova Scotia is another important step on the path to ensuring all families have access to high-quality, affordable and inclusive child care. Because every child deserves the best possible start in life. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

#### Quick Facts:

- Nova Scotia invests \$132.6 million in early learning and child care annually, including \$54 million for pre-primary and over \$75 million for the child care sector
- there are 334 licensed child care centres in Nova Scotia and 14 licensed Family Home Child Care Agencies
- Nova Scotia was a leader in supporting the child care sector throughout the third-wave of the pandemic, providing about \$7.7 million in additional funds to cover staffing and operational costs while capacity was capped at 60 per cent under COVID-19 restrictions

**Region:** Nova Scotia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** federal budget <sup>[4]</sup>

advocacy <sup>[5]</sup>

federal funding <sup>[6]</sup>

universal system <sup>[7]</sup>

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