

# N.S. child-care fees to drop to \$10 a day by 2026 under new \$605M deal <sup>[1]</sup>

New federal-provincial agreement will also reduce fees by half by the end of next year

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## AVAILABILITY

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

## EXCERPTED

A \$605-million agreement between the Nova Scotia and federal governments will see child-care costs halved in the province by the end of next year and become \$10 a day by 2026.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier Iain Rankin made the announcement Tuesday, with Trudeau appearing virtually, at a news conference at Mount Saint Vincent University's Child Study Centre in Halifax.

"This is historic," said Rankin in a press release. "This is a game-changer for Nova Scotia families — better care that is more affordable and accessible."

The funding, which will be rolled out over five years, will also create 9,500 new early learning and child-care spaces, including new spaces for infants and toddlers, by March 31, 2025, and a new early learning program for three-year-olds, with priority access for vulnerable and equity-seeking families.

According to the news release, Nova Scotia's share of the \$605 million in funding will be \$40 million over the next five years, on top of what it currently spends on the sector.

"All families should have access to quality, affordable child care," said Trudeau in the news release.

"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."

Before- and after-school care options will also be enhanced, according to the news release.

The province will create a new organization to oversee all regulated child care, but the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will regulate the new body.

## New funding for early childhood educators

An extra \$22.5 million in federal funding was also announced Tuesday, including \$11.6 to extend the federal-provincial early learning and child-care agreement for 2021-22, and a one-time investment of \$10.9 million, which will support Nova Scotia's excellence in early childhood education workforce strategy.

The money will be used to:

- Provide free tuition and books for over 300 staff now working in child care and pre-primary without a diploma, with designated seats for Indigenous, Black, Acadian/francophone Nova Scotians and newcomers.
- Give trained ECEs who work in provincially funded child-care centres a one-time, \$500 grant.
- Develop a new framework by 2022 to improve pay and benefits for ECEs working in government-funded, licensed child-care facilities.
- Give bursaries to 300 students now enrolled in full-time ECE diploma or degree programs.
- Introduce a regulated certification process for ECEs.
- Create a post-diploma training program that would allow ECEs to specialize and advance in a particular area of practice.

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

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

funding <sup>[5]</sup>

advocacy <sup>[6]</sup>

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

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