

Nova Scotian families to benefit from early learning and child care agreement ^[1]

Author:

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Excerpts from news release

Every child deserves the best possible start in life, and all parents should have the ability to build both a family and career. Yet, too many families across 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, too many parents – especially women – cannot fully participate in the workforce.

That is why, in the most recent federal budget, the Government of Canada laid out a transformative plan to build a Canada-wide, community-based system of quality and affordable early learning and child care, which aims to achieve, on average, \$10 a day child care spaces for Canadian families. Investing in early learning and child care provides jobs for workers, makes life more affordable for families, enables parents – especially mothers – to build careers, and gives every child a real and fair chance to succeed.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Premier of Nova Scotia, Iain Rankin, today announced an agreement that will significantly improve early learning and child care for children in the province. As part of the agreement, the Government of Canada will invest \$605 million over the next five years to help improve regulated early learning and child care for children under six years of age in Nova Scotia.

Through this agreement, the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia will work together to improve access to quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services. With the federal funding provided through the agreement, Nova Scotia will achieve an average parent fee of \$10 per day for all regulated child care spaces for children under six by the end of fiscal year 2025-26. By the end of 2022, Nova Scotians will see a 50 per cent reduction in average parent fees for children under the age of six in regulated child care. This agreement will lead to the creation of 4,000 new regulated early learning and child care spaces for children under the age of six within two years, and a total of 9,500 spaces by fiscal year 2025-26 following consultation and engagement with stakeholders and communities.

This agreement will fund critical services, and grow a strong and skilled workforce of early childhood educators, including through the creation of a wage grid and greater opportunities for professional development. It will expand not-for-profit and public delivery of early learning and child care with the goal of moving to a fully not-for-profit and publicly managed system. The system will be supported by a new provincial organization that will manage all regulated child care in the province. The agreement will also support a child care system that is fully inclusive of children with disabilities and those needing enhanced or individual supports, and ensures all families have equitable access to high-quality, affordable child care.

Today, the Government of Canada also announced funding of \$58 million over the next four years for the 2021-25 Canada-Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Extension Agreement to continue initiatives funded in the previous 2020-21 agreement, as well as to invest in infant care and an accelerated early childhood diploma program, and \$10.9 million in 2021-22 for Nova Scotia to support the recruitment and retention of an early childhood workforce.

The time for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system is now. Last week, the governments of Canada and British Columbia took a significant step toward making this system a reality by signing a historic early learning and child care agreement. The Government of Canada will continue to work with provinces, territories, and Indigenous partners across the country to make life easier and more affordable for families, help parents – especially mothers – return to the workforce, and give children across the country an equal chance to succeed.

Quotes

“All families should have access to quality, affordable child care. That is why, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, we are laying the foundation for Canada’s first-ever Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Today’s agreement with Nova Scotia is an important step forward to making this system a reality, and delivering much-needed support to families and communities as we build back better from the pandemic.”

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

“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. 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.”

- The Hon. Iain Rankin, Premier of Nova Scotia

“Ensuring all Canadians have access to high-quality and affordable early learning and child care is feminist economic policy and smart economic policy. It is critical social infrastructure, over 50 years in the making, which will drive jobs and growth. By working with the Government of Nova Scotia on implementing the beginning of this historic investment, we will be giving every child in the province the best possible start in life, increasing women’s participation in the workforce, creating jobs, and making life more affordable for young families across Nova Scotia.”

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

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life. 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.”

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

Quick Facts

- In addition to the federal contribution, the Province of Nova Scotia currently 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.
- The governments of Canada and Nova Scotia will create an Implementation Committee that will monitor progress on child care commitments in consultation with stakeholders. The Government of Canada will be represented on this committee by the Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care.
- 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.
- Budgets 2016 and 2017 provided investments in early learning and child care totaling \$7.5 billion over 11 years, starting in 2017-18, to support and create more high-quality, affordable child care across the country, and to strengthen Indigenous early learning and child care. The \$58 million in funding over the next four years for the 2021-25 Canada-Nova Scotia Early Learning and Child Care Extension Agreement is part of these investments.
- The recruitment and retention of early childhood educators is a challenge across Canada. To this end, in the 2020 Fall Economic Statement, the government provided \$420 million in 2021-22 for provinces and territories to help attract and retain these workers, such as through grants and bursaries for students studying early childhood education, and an additional \$75 million in 2021-22 to improve the quality and accessibility of Indigenous child care programs. Today’s announcement of \$10.9 million in 2021-22 for Nova Scotia is included as part of this commitment.
- 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 over 2,000 in Nova Scotia.
- 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.
- To promote greater gender equality at home and in the workplace, the Government of Canada has also introduced the Parental Sharing Benefit. This new measure provides an additional five weeks of Employment Insurance parental benefits when parents – including adoptive and same-sex parents – agree to share parental benefits.

Region: Nova Scotia ^[3]

Tags: federal budget ^[4]

federal funding ^[5]

universal system ^[6]

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[2] <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2021/07/13/nova-scotian-families-benefit-early-learning-and-child-care-agreement>

[3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7853>

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