

Canada and Yukon announce major expansion of \$10 a day child care ^[1]

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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.

Today, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Honourable Sandy Silver, Yukon Premier, and the Honourable Jeanie McLean, Yukon Minister of Education, announced an agreement that significantly improves early learning and child care for children in Yukon. Through the agreement, the governments of Canada and Yukon will work together to rapidly expand access to quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services.

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 that provides parents in Canada with, on average, \$10 a day regulated child care spaces for children under age six. This plan will make life more affordable for families, create new jobs, get parents back into the workforce, and grow the middle class, while giving every child the best possible start in life.

Today's announcement includes the creation of 110 new regulated early learning and child care spaces within five years to help ensure families of children under six years old can access child care spaces that meet their needs. The Government of Canada's investment builds on Yukon's efforts to date to ensure that all families have access to an average of \$10 a day out-of-pocket parent fees for full-time regulated child care spaces for children under age six.

This agreement will fund critical services, and attract, retain and grow a strong and skilled workforce of early childhood educators, including through greater opportunities for professional development. This agreement also supports the ongoing implementation of Yukon's wage grid, which provides a minimum wage of nearly \$30 an hour to fully qualified early childhood educators— the highest minimum wage for early childhood educators in the country.

Federal funding will be exclusively used to support the creation of regulated spaces in not-for-profit and public early learning and child care providers, as well as family-based providers. The agreement will also support an early learning and child care system that is fully inclusive of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, and ensures all families have equitable access to high quality, affordable early learning and child care. The agreement also supports a clear commitment to continue to work collaboratively with Yukon First Nations to ensure Indigenous children will have access to affordable, high-quality and culturally appropriate early learning and child care.

Since 2015, through programs like the Canada Child Benefit which has recently once again been indexed to inflation, the government has been helping make life more affordable for families.

Quotes

“Strong educational supports for children of all ages and needs are vital for the success and prosperity of all Yukoners. This year we introduced the Yukon's first universal affordable childcare program to provide Yukon children with access to affordable, high-quality childcare and learning opportunities. We are pleased to work with the Government of Canada to enhance this program and make life more affordable for Yukon families. Not only is this an investment that benefits our children's development, it is an investment that benefits our local economy and equality in the workforce.” — The Honourable

“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 Yukon on implementing the beginning of this historic investment, we will be giving every child in the territory the best possible start in life, increasing women’s participation in the workforce, creating jobs, and making life more affordable for young families across Yukon.” — The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

“Child care is not a luxury; it's a necessity. Our vision for early learning and child care is big and ambitious, but our government knows that it's the right thing to do to ensure every child has the best start in life. Through this historic agreement, our government is working to ensure that all children in Yukon have access to the quality child care they need to succeed.” — The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

“This historic agreement between the governments of Yukon and Canada will allow us to expand our new universal affordable childcare program and enhance childcare delivery in the Yukon. Together with our partners we are supporting early learning programs for Yukon families that incorporate on-the-land and experiential learning, local First Nation ways of knowing, doing, and being, traditional language learning, and more. We look forward to continue working with Yukon First Nations, childcare operators and educators to build capacity and deliver inclusive, accessible programming that meets the needs of all Yukon children.” — The Honourable Jeanie McLean, Minister of Education

Quick facts

On April 1, 2021, Yukon introduced a universal child care system, part of a \$25 million annual investment in its early learning and child care system. In addition, the Government of Canada will contribute a total of nearly \$42 million over five years to build on Yukon’s efforts to date to ensure that all families have access to an average of \$10 a day out-of-pocket parent fees for full-time regulated early learning and child care spaces for children under age six.

The governments of Canada and Yukon will create an Implementation Committee that will monitor progress on early learning and child care commitments in consultation with partners and 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 thereafter, 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 over 1,500 in Yukon.

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). For over five years, the CCB has provided almost \$25 billion in tax-free support per year to about 3.5 million families, and is now providing families with \$350 more per child than when the program began.

Since 2015, the Government of Canada has been helping make life more affordable for families. This includes programs like the Canada Child Benefit, which was annually increased again this week to help families keep up with the costs of living and raising their children.

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: Yukon Territory ^[3]

Tags: federal budget ^[4]

\$10 a day ^[5]

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