

Federal-provincial action plan on early learning and child care released ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador today announced an agreement that will transform early learning and child care in the province starting in 2022. Through this agreement, Newfoundland and Labrador will receive more than \$347 million between 2021-22 and 2025-26 to implement an ambitious Early Learning and Child Care Action Plan.

The Honourable Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador joined the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada to lay out a plan to increase access to child care, improve affordability and improve the quality and inclusivity of early learning and child care programming.

The two leaders were joined by the Honourable Tom Osborne, Minister of Education, the Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Honourable Seamus O'Regan, Minister of Natural Resources Canada and Member of Parliament for St. John's South – Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador at this announcement.

The plan features targets to achieve several shared priorities between the Federal and Provincial Governments. These include:

Access

Working with not-for-profit groups, municipalities and family home child care operators to create approximately 5,800 additional regulated child care spaces by 2025-26.

Introducing a new Pre-Kindergarten program starting in 2023. This optional early learning and child care program will be available full-time to all four year-olds in the province, and will be fully implemented by 2025-26.

Affordability

Further reducing the cost of regulated child care to \$15 per day on January 1, 2022 and to \$10 per day in 2023.

Quality

Working with a consultant to conduct labour force adjustment analysis specific to Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in order to develop a wage-grid for ECEs by the end of 2022, with full implementation by 2023.

Creating an Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Committee by March 31, 2023, which will advise the Minister of Education on a wide range of early learning and childcare issues.

Increasing the percentage of fully certified ECEs working in the sector by 15 per cent by the end of 2023 and to at least 60 per cent by the end of 2025.

Increasing bursary funding for ECEs through the ECE Graduate Bursary Program, the ECE Trainee Bursary Program and the ECE On-Campus Field Placement Bursary.

Inclusivity

Enhancing the existing Child Care Capacity Initiative, with a focus on creating additional spaces in rural communities, linguistic minority communities and Indigenous communities.

Making specific allowances for space creation, bursaries and ECE training for groups from diverse populations including Indigenous, black and other racialized people, 2SLGBTQ+, newcomers to Canada, individuals with exceptionalities and official language minorities.

The funding announced through this agreement is part of the Federal Government's recently announced investment for the establishment of a Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System.

To support early learning and child care providers, the province will also look to enhance the Operating Grant Program to ensure that

regulated operations remain financially viable and to retain and attract new ECEs.

In light of this agreement, today the Provincial Government also announced the introduction of public consultations to inform the path forward on implementing the Action Plan with the current early learning and child care sector, as well as to inform future changes to the Child Care Act.

Anyone looking to participate can visit engageNL to provide feedback. This first phase of consultations will be followed by a second phase of specific stakeholder meetings in Fall 2021, wherein the Minister of Education will consult directly with sector groups.

Quotes

“All families should have access to quality, affordable child care. That is why, from coast to coast to coast, we are laying the foundation for Canada’s first-ever Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Today’s agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador is an important step forward to making \$10 a day child care a reality, and delivering much-needed support to families and communities as we build back better from the pandemic.”

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

“Since the introduction of \$25 per day child care this year, we have been at the forefront of affordable child care in this country, and we are thrilled to maintain our leadership position as one of the first provinces to announce plans for this important federal funding. Investments in early learning and child care are investments in our economy, and this plan will support affordability and access for all Newfoundland and Labrador families.”

Honourable Andrew Furey
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador

“Child care is not a luxury, it’s a necessity. Our vision for early learning and child care is big and ambitious, but if we tell our kids to dream big, we need to lead by example. Today’s historic agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador 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.”

Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Government of Canada

“Our priorities are to support affordability, increase access and enhance the quality of early childhood learning and child care. This approach sets the stage for significant, sector-wide changes that will support each of these priorities, while also providing children with a stronger foundation for entering the K-12 system. We are enthusiastic partners with the Federal Government in supporting families and children in Newfoundland and Labrador.”

Honourable Tom Osborne
Minister of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Region: Newfoundland ^[3]

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