

\$10-a-day N.L. child care expected by 2023 with \$347M federal-provincial agreement ^[1]

New plan will help stretch family budgets further, says premier

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EXCERPTS

Newfoundland and Labrador will have \$10-a-day child care by 2023, according to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Trudeau said an agreement has been reached between the federal and provincial governments to make child care more accessible and more affordable for parents at an announcement at the College of the North Atlantic on Prince Philip Drive in St. John's on Wednesday.

Newfoundland and Labrador will receive more than \$347 million between 2021 and 2025 as part of the agreement.

The prime minister said for children under six in regulated child care, average fees will drop from \$25-a-day to down to \$10.

Education Minister Tom Osborne said child-care fees will drop to \$15-a-day starting Jan. 1, 2022, before falling further to \$10 in the following year.

Almost 6,000 new child-care spaces will be created within five years, Trudeau added, and, as part of the agreement, a new optional full-day, year-round pre-kindergarten program will start in 2023.

"More affordable child care will help save hundreds of dollars every month for families right across the province," Trudeau said.

"It will allow more women to build careers knowing that their children are in good hands with great educators and providers, and with quality child care, it will ensure that all kids have the best possible support in life."

Newfoundland and Labrador joins Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and British Columbia as provinces which have reached similar agreements with the federal government this month.

In April, the federal government laid out its plan to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

Jobs and affordability

Trudeau said Wednesday's agreement also will create good jobs and greater opportunities for professional development to grow a strong, skilled workforce. He said supporting the recruitment and retention of qualified child-care workers will be key to the long-lasting success of the agreement.

Premier Andrew Furey said Wednesday was a "huge day" for Newfoundland and Labrador, as the child-care announcement comes on the heels of a deal struck between the province and the federal government earlier on Wednesday to prevent electricity rates from spiking with Muskrat Falls poised to be commissioned in the fall.

"Affordable child care has always been a priority for me. It was part of my campaign platform and it was really the first piece of true policy that I passed when I became premier," Furey said.

"Today's announcement means that we can stretch household budgets even further. We will be the first to achieve \$10-a-day child care across our great nation."

Furey said the agreement will increase access to child care, improve affordability and improve the quality of early childhood training programs.

An early learning and child care advisory committee will be created by March 31, 2023, which will advise the minister of education on a wide range of early learning and child-care issues.

Further, the agreement also includes plans to increase the percentage of fully certified early childhood educators (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.

Osborne said the province is also committing to supporting those training to become ECEs by increasing the value of grants and bursaries.

Region: Newfoundland ^[3]

Tags: affordability ^[4]

universal system ^[5]

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