

Childcare provider optimistic New Brunswick will eventually sign onto cheaper daycare plan ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

New Brunswick is the only province in Atlantic Canada that hasn't yet made a deal with the Trudeau government to cut childcare costs in the province.

Newfoundland and Labrador announced Wednesday it would adopt the prime minister's \$10 a day plan, the day after P.E.I. reached an agreement.

The two join Nova Scotia, British Columbia and the Yukon on the path toward dramatically cutting daycare costs for parents.

On P.E.I. alone, the program is expected to see 452 new childcare spaces open up within two years, with costs set to drop by half by the end of 2022, before dropping further to the \$10 a day mark by 2024.

Will New Brunswick ever sign on?

One childcare provider in Saint John says she thinks so.

"New Brunswick, historically, has taken their time doing things, they don't rush into it," says Heather Hamilton, owner and operator of Hamilton Homestyle Daycare.

"But I think they'll take their time and make the right choice and they'll get there, too."

With over 20 years of experience in the industry, Hamilton says most parents nowadays are paying upwards of \$26 dollars a day for infant care — about \$800 a month.

She says making it more affordable will level the playing field for parents who haven't been able to afford to put their kids in daycare.

"It's like wearing uniforms to a private school," she says.

"You can't judge what clothing they wear because they don't show it at school.

"Here, it becomes an even playing field for those who are coming through the door."

While her daycare is full, she expects to see the waitlist grow when childcare becomes more affordable — with skyrocketing demand.

That in itself would lead to job creation, with more daycare centres opening through New Brunswick.

Plus more parents in the workforce.

So why hasn't New Brunswick signed on?

During a stop in Moncton Tuesday, Prime Minister Trudeau said it's the province's move.

"The ball is very much in the province's court," Trudeau said.

"The federal government can't simply wave a magic wand and create national child care across the country, no matter how many billions of dollars we put towards it."

Global News reached out to the provincial government Wednesday for comment.

A spokesperson says they've been working toward an agreement, with still more work to be done.

"While we're aware that several other provinces have signed agreements with the federal government, we continue to carefully negotiate a deal that would maximize benefits to New Brunswick families," writes Flavio Nienow, communications officer for the department of education and early childhood development.

“While our goal is to reach an agreement as soon as possible, we must ensure it addresses the unique realities of the province’s early learning and child care sector and increases access to affordable, quality care.”

No timeline was provided for how long negotiations might last.

Region: New Brunswick ^[4]

Tags: affordability ^[5]

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