

Ottawa announces \$6 billion transfer to Quebec aimed at strengthening child care ^[1]

Author: Canadian Press

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EXCERPTS

The federal government is transferring about \$6 billion to Quebec over five years in connection with Ottawa's national child-care program, but the money comes without conditions and Quebec's government can spend it how it pleases.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made the announcement Thursday alongside Premier François Legault in Montreal, who said a significant portion of the \$6 billion will go toward "completing" the province's child-care network.

Legault told reporters the money is "without conditions," adding that the province already spends \$2.7 billion a year on its child-care system, which he said costs parents, on average, \$8.50 a day per child.

"What that means is that Quebec will receive financing to continue developing its network," Legault said. "We also have a deal that says after the year 2026, (Ottawa) will continue to help finance (the network)."

Trudeau has been travelling the country in recent weeks, announcing hundreds of millions of dollars in agreements with provinces to create a national child-care system.

The prime minister said Thursday his government's national plan was inspired by Quebec's child-care network, and the deal "will allow you to create tens of thousands of new child care spaces, in addition to reducing fees."

Canada has already signed child-care deals with British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador — ahead of what reports say could be an end-of-summer federal election campaign. Trudeau said the various agreements with provinces outside Quebec will allow them to create \$10-dollar-a-day child care places in a few years and raise wages for educators.

Legault called the deal his government signed with Ottawa "asymmetric," meaning that while the federal government imposed certain conditions on the money it gave to other provinces for child care, Quebec has no such conditions.

The premier said his government estimates another 37,000 child-care spaces are needed in the province, adding that the wages of educators in the network also need to be increased. But the premier wouldn't specify how much of the money announced Thursday will go to child care.

Legault said the agreement "respects the jurisdiction of Quebec," adding that it's a "beautiful victory for Quebec families."

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: bilateral agreement ^[4]

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