

Advocates celebrate Saskatchewan child care agreement and vow federal election will not end the building of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system ^[1]

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Source: Child Care Now

Format: Article

Publication Date: 15 Aug 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Canada's child care advocates say the Canada-Saskatchewan child care agreement announced today promises to more than double the existing supply of regulated child care spaces for the province's youngest children, cut fees by 50% in the next year and bring them down to \$10 a day by 2026.

"We are glad to hear the promise of a big increase in the availability of affordable regulated non-for-profit child care in Saskatchewan and in other jurisdictions covered by similar child care agreements," said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now, Canada's national child care advocacy association.

"We are counting on provincial governments to consult widely with advocates, the early learning and child care sector, Indigenous leaders and communities and many others to develop a comprehensive expansion plan to make sure that the new regulated child care spaces are located and funded to reach underserved populations and communities," added Ballantyne.

Ballantyne said increasing the number of regulated child care programs will require a large increase in the early learning and child care workforce.

"We applaud the federal government for making sure that each of the child care agreements signed to date, including the Saskatchewan agreement, includes measures to address the current shortage of qualified early childhood educators and the big problem of recruitment and retention in the sector," she said.

"The commitment to putting in place provincial wage grids that properly value early childhood educators and encourage educators to further education and professional development is very important to developing a high quality system of early learning and child care," she added.

Child Care Now said Saskatchewan is the eighth jurisdiction to join the federal government's plan to build a Canada-wide system of child care, and that it will likely be the last to reach an agreement before the expected federal election call.

"Child care advocates will work through the election period to make sure the federal Liberal government's long-term spending commitment set out in the 2021 federal budget is sustained and expanded, and we will be asking all the political parties to honour the child care funding agreements that have been signed and reach agreements with those provinces and territories that have not yet done so," said Ballantyne.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: federal budget ^[4]

advocacy ^[5]

universal system ^[6]

child care workforce ^[7]

affordability ^[8]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/08/advocates-celebrate-saskatchewan-child-care-agreement-and-vow> [2] <https://timeforchildcare.ca/2021/08/15/advocates-celebrate-saskatchewan-child-care-agreement-and-vow-not-to-allow-a-federal-election-to-derail-the-building-of-a-canada-wide-early-learning-and-child-care-system/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-budget> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/advocacy> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9083> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care-workforce> [8]

