

The exhausted parent's guide to the federal election ^[1]

No time (or energy) to research who stands for what? That's OK—we did it for you. Our federal election cheat sheet breaks down each party's position on major family issues.

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Source: Today's Parent

Format: Article

Publication Date: 6 Sep 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpted from Child Care

Getting up to speed on federal politics probably wasn't on your Summer 2021 bucket list. But with Canadians heading to the polls on September 20, it's critical for parents to understand what's at stake this election—and how the outcome will shape your family's future.

No time to do the research, you say? We get it—you're busy making sure small humans are clean, fed and safe. That's why we put together this cheat sheet outlining where each party stands on the main issues that parents care about. All that's left for you to do is vote, which you can even do by mail (so long as you apply online or by contacting any Elections Canada office across Canada before September 14, 6:00 p.m.)

[Note that because the federal Green party had not yet issued a party platform or spoken publicly on many issues as of the publication date of this article, we have indicated what their stances were in the 2019 election in some sections, where applicable.]

Child care

While this is a big issue every election, it has taken centre stage as a result of the proposed \$10/day child care plan announced in the Liberals' 2021 budget.

LIBERALS: Up to \$30 billion is on the table over five years to build an affordable child care system, but each province/territory has to enter an agreement with the feds to receive funding. (So far, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Quebec, and Saskatchewan have signed on.) The plan would create 250,000 new high-quality child care spaces, cut average fees in half by the end of next year, and reduce the average cost to \$10/day within five years.

While the \$30 billion price tag may sound high, it's worth noting that in Quebec—which has had \$10/day child care since the late 1990s—the program more than pays for itself because it lets more parents enter the workforce (and pay income tax). Projections show the same would be true on a national level.

Monthly Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payments, which you probably already receive for any child under 18, would continue as is. So would the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) which lowers your household tax bill if both you and your spouse earn income and pay for child care.

CONSERVATIVES: The Conservatives don't support the Liberal plan and instead want to put more money in parents' pockets by increasing the CCED. In short, they would make it a refundable tax credit that covers up to 75% of child care fees for lower income families. The credit would be paid out monthly along with the CCB, which they would also boost by starting benefit payments during the seventh month of pregnancy.

Other Conservative promises include changes to parental leave (such as enhanced benefits for parents who adopt, allowing earnings of up to \$1,000/month, and extending the leave for up to eight weeks after the death of an infant), and providing three days' paid bereavement leave after a miscarriage.

NDP: A universal \$10/day licensed child care system was already an NDP priority during the 2019 election, well before the Liberal's proposal, and is again a pillar of the party's platform. It would also revamp parental leave so parents can get more money for a shorter time, let self-employed workers opt in to the program, and double the leave for parents of multiples.

GREENS: Although the party hasn't made any specific promises on this issue during the campaign to date, it supports universal child care and its 2019 platform called for more inclusive, flexible and higher paying maternity/paternity benefits.

Tip: If you're curious as to how much each plan might save you, some articles and reports have crunched the numbers. Bottom line? Most families would see the greatest benefits from a \$10/day plan, with those in the Greater Toronto Area as well as cities in B.C. and Alberta coming out \$5,000 to \$10,000 ahead as compared to the enhanced tax credit plan.

Region: Canada ^[3]

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Source URL (modified on 7 Sep 2021): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/09/exhausted-parent%E2%80%99s-guide-federal-election>

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