

The Brief: Measuring child care affordability ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

While the issue of child care has been a part of policy conversations for decades, COVID-19 sharpened the spotlight on this issue.

And back in April 2021, the federal government featured child care as one of the central planks of its budget and announced a program to achieve \$10/day child care in Canada.

Investing \$30 billion over five years in an early learning and child care system, this program was designed to “make life more affordable for Canadian families, create new jobs, grow the middle class, increase women’s participation in the work force, and drive strong economic growth across the country.”

But what does “affordability” mean?

Child care affordability can be measured in a couple different ways, and these measures have different implications for policy decisions and ultimately labour force participation.

To better understand this issue, we have been working with researchers Rob Buschmann and Gordon Cleveland from the University of Alberta and University of Toronto, respectively, to break down the measures of affordability and their impact on just how affordable child care is in Alberta.

This episode dives into that research and touches the equally important issues of accessibility and the impact of child care policies on labour force participation, potential earnings, and overall economic growth.

In this episode:

- What constitutes “child care”
- Two common ways to measure affordability
- Alberta’s current model of affordability
- How affordable child care is in Alberta
- Impact of \$10/day child care program
- Accessibility in child care programs
- Child care, work, and labour force participation

About The Brief

In this series, co-hosts Scott Crockatt and Brittany Brander explore the big challenges we face as Albertans; celebrate stories of growth, innovation, and prosperity; and discover bold ideas to make life better for Albertans. See more episodes here.

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