

# Trudeau, Kenney ink child-care deal for Alberta <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

OTTAWA -- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Alberta Premier Jason Kenney have signed a deal to make child-care services in the province more affordable.

This makes Alberta the eighth province to formalize an agreement with the federal government that would see billions of dollars go towards establishing \$10-per-day early learning and child care by 2026.

Now, New Brunswick, Ontario, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut remain the only provinces and territories yet to sign the dotted line.

Ottawa unveiled their ambitious \$30 billion child-care plan in their spring budget.

Speaking in Edmonton on Monday, Trudeau said the pandemic has put into focus the need for accessible child care.

"I think one of the things that really came through on this past year and a half is that making sure we have proper support for families, proper support for young kids that will allow parents to get back to work, is unbelievably important," said Trudeau, speaking to reporters.

"Child care is not just a social program, it's about growing the economy as well."

According to 2020 data from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Toronto, Ont. reported the highest median toddler fees last year at \$1,578 a month, followed by Richmond Hill, Ont., at \$1,327 and Richmond, B.C. at \$1,300.

Calgary ranks the highest among Albertan cities, at \$1,250 per month.

Trudeau said the agreement shows that two governments, with differing perspectives on a range of issues, can find common ground.

"The provinces and the federal government don't always get along on everything and there are always going to be points of disagreement but I'm really, really pleased to be here today with Premier Kenney and the Government of Alberta to demonstrate that on the things that matter most to citizens...we can get big things done," he said.

Kenney said the deal, negotiated by his Minister of Children's Services Rebecca Schulz, meets the unique needs of Albertan parents.

"This means that all types of licensed child care for kids up to kindergarten like preschools, daycare, and licensed family day homes will now be supported through this deal with the federal government," said Kenney.

More than half of child-care spaces in Alberta are in private settings.

The money will go towards creating operating grants, raising subsidy programs to help low-income families, and increasing infant care spaces.

Kenney was asked why the province didn't get the same flexibility in their deal as Quebec did with its. The federal government is working with the province separately to enhance their already low-cost child-care framework.

"We certainly wanted the same flexibility as Quebec. Of course, Quebec has had their own program for many years but they got, I understand, complete flexibility in their agreement, which we would have preferred," he said.

"But at the end of the day, this is the best deal that we could get."

Trudeau responded stating that Quebec's arrangement isn't a question of flexibility.

"Quebec already has \$10 a day child care, indeed it's \$8.50. So it made no sense for us to impose conditions that they have already surpassed. It's not about treating one province differently," he said.

Karina Gould, minister of families, children and social development spoke to negotiations with Ontario, noting that Ottawa is still waiting for an action plan from the province.

“As has been the case with every single province and territory across the country, seven months ago, the Government of Canada sent a terms sheet basically explaining what our objectives are with regards to fee reduction, space creation, and workforce development,” she said.

“We’re still waiting for more details from the province of Ontario.”

The Liberal’s 2021 budget stipulates that Ottawa will authorize the transfer of the first batch of funding as soon as bilateral agreements are reached.

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