

Hurry up, Kathleen Wynne tells Tories as negotiations for child-care funding continue with Ottawa ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

As provincial and federal officials quietly negotiate on \$10-a-day child care, former premier Kathleen Wynne is pushing Queen's Park to make a deal with Ottawa.

"It was encouraging last week when we learned the minister was going to be meeting with federal officials to hammer out a child care agreement, but that has not happened," she said Monday in the legislature.

"I know first-hand that negotiations between provincial and federal governments can be slow and they can be frustrating," said Wynne, who was premier of Ontario from 2013 to 2018.

"But ... this federal government has been able to sign agreements with most of the other provinces and territories in the country," she said.

"I know Ontario is special, it's very special, but families in Windsor or Thunder Bay are not so very different from families in Calgary or Halifax. They all need child care that they can afford."

A defensive Education Minister Stephen Lecce countered that the cost of child care in Ontario "rose by 400 per cent" during the almost 15-year Liberal reign of Wynne and her predecessor, Dalton McGuinty.

"That is indefensible and ... everyone would recognize in this legislature that families paid the price for that neglect, where it was inaccessible and unaffordable for too many moms and dads in Ontario," he said.

Wynne reminded Lecce that "never for one moment in our time in office did we have a federal government putting \$30 billion on the table to reduce child-care costs in Ontario."

Ottawa is offering Ontario \$10.2 billion, which is the province's portion of \$27.2 billion the federal government has committed to funding child care.

But Premier Doug Ford has said Queen's Park deserves a larger stake because child care is more expensive here and the provincial government already spends \$3.6 billion on full-day kindergarten for all 260,000 four- and five-year-old children.

A senior provincial official, speaking confidentially in order to discuss internal deliberations, said Monday that talks with Ottawa are proceeding well.

"There's always been a path," the insider said, adding the federal government is "still drilling down on the numbers, which we've got a lot of confidence in."

Karina Gould, the federal minister for families, children and social development, said last week that she believes a deal with Ontario is within reach.

"I really do feel optimistic. The fact that officials are talking is a really good sign," said Gould.

"Do I think it's going to happen in the immediate term? No, there's still a lot of work and conversation to have. But I think that the general objectives ... are there."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: \$10 a day ^[4]

federal agreement ^[5]

affordable child care ^[6]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/12/hurry-kathleen-wynne-tells-tories-negotiations-child-care-funding> [2] <https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/2021/11/29/hurry-up-kathleen-wynne-tells-tories-as-negotiations-for-child-care-funding-continue-with-ottawa.html> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/10-a-day-child-care> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9148> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordable-child-care>