

Ford's delay on child care deal with Ottawa hurts families ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The first Monday of every month, I call 10 child care centres to ask where my kid is on the wait-list and if they'll have a space for us in April when he's 18 months old.

We put our names down when I was 6 weeks pregnant, in March 2020, double checking the math that it would be 2022 (!) when we'd need a space. With only enough licensed spaces for 1-in-4 kids in Toronto, it felt like we were already too late. At the time, we joked that at least by 2022 the government might finally deliver on the decades-long promise of \$10-a-day child care.

With four months to go until April, it's a good news/bad news situation. The good news: today one child care centre told us they probably have a space for us. The bad news: it costs \$86.50/day. That's almost \$2,000/month.

The agonizing, infuriating, throw something at the wall, scream into a pillow news: it's been 231 days since Justin Trudeau (borrowing heavily from the NDP) announced actual dollars available to provinces to cut child care fees in half by 2022, and to an average of \$10-a-day within five years. Not only would this funding lower parent fees, it would also allow for decent pay for the (mostly) women who work in child care.

Ontario is one of only two provinces to not yet take the money.

My wife and I both have good jobs, so while we'll have to dip into our savings to pay for child care, we can absorb it. That this makes us feel lucky is absurd, but fine. What about families without the privileges we have? What about single-parent households waiting for a subsidy? What about families with more than one kid in child care?

Studies show increasing access to affordable child care means more women are able to work and support their families. Quebec's universal child care program more than pays for itself because of the revenue generated by parents who are able to work instead of staying home with their kids.

Thanks to decades of activism from parents, women, and groups like the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Toronto Community for Better Child Care, we have an opportunity to finally make child care more affordable for everyone. But for 33 weeks — 231 days — Doug Ford and Stephen Lecce have refused to make a deal and save families across Ontario thousands of dollars a month.

If parents like me are going to keep paying the price for his inaction, Doug Ford should pay the price too. Help put pressure on Ford and Lecce to make a deal. If Ford can't or won't make a deal, tell Toronto City Council to negotiate directly with the federal government. Send a message to your elected representatives at progresstoronto.ca/affordable-child-care-now. Tell politicians to make it happen.

In the meantime I'll be here, calling 10 child care centres again next month.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: bilateral agreement ^[4]
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