

Child Care Now on Canada-NB Canada-Wide Child Care Agreement ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Child care advocates say new funding set out in Canada-New Brunswick child care agreement must be used to make big changes over next five years

OTTAWA, DECEMBER 13, 2021– Child Care Now, Canada’s national child care advocacy organization, welcomed the announcement today that parent fees for licensed child care services in New Brunswick will drop by an average of 50% in the next year and to an average of \$10 a day by 2025-26 and that more licensed spaces will be created over the next five years.

“We are also very glad to learn that the Government of New Brunswick will be increasing its own financial commitment to early learning and child care by \$53 million over the next five years, which added to the federal government’s transfer of \$492 million, represents a major public investment,” said Morna Ballantyne, Child Care Now’s Executive Director.

“We will be doing everything we can to advocate that this spending is directed to making transformative change in early childhood education and child care in the province rather than reinforce the status quo because what we have seen in New Brunswick until now, like elsewhere in Canada, is a patchwork approach to fixing big problems like the very uneven supply of services across the province, and the critical shortages of qualified early childhood educators largely because of the very poor compensation paid to those who work in the sector,” Ballantyne added.

The Canada-NB child care agreement commits to creating 3,400 more spaces in designated early learning centres including 500 new spaces by March 2023. Child Care Now says an expansion plan will have to be developed in consultation with local communities, including Indigenous nations and organizations, municipalities and public education officials, to ensure that high quality services are put in place particularly in the not-for-profit and public sectors.

“We call on the governments of New Brunswick and Canada to consult with child care advocates to develop a comprehensive public expansion plan to ensure the new regulated child care spaces are located and funded to reach underserved populations and communities,” Ballantyne added.

Ballantyne said the conclusion of a federal child care agreement with New Brunswick will now add pressure on Ontario to participate in the Government of Canada’s effort to establish a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care.

“It is now even more difficult for the Government of Ontario to say that the federal government’s framework for a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care is not good enough for Ontario when it has been agreed to by all the other provinces,” said Ballantyne. “How can the Government of Ontario continue to refuse the federal government’s offer of \$10.2 billion to meet the needs of children, families, and employers, especially when it is unrefuted that building an affordable and accessible quality system of child care is key to economic recovery from the pandemic.”

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