

\$10-a-day child care for families in the Northwest Territories ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Every child deserves the best possible start in life, and all parents should have the ability to build both a family and career. Yet, too many families across Canada lack access to affordable, inclusive, and high-quality child care. The COVID-19 pandemic has also made it clear that without access to child care, too many parents – especially women – cannot fully participate in the workforce.

That is why the Government of Canada has laid out a plan to provide Canadian families with, on average, \$10-a-day child care spaces for children under six years old. This plan to build a Canada-wide, community-based early learning and child care system will make life more affordable for families, create new jobs, get parents back into the workforce, and grow the middle class, while giving every child an opportunity to participate in early learning and child care programming that supports optimal child development.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Premier of the Northwest Territories, Caroline Cochrane, today announced an agreement that will support an average of \$10-a-day child care in the territory, significantly reducing the price of child care for families. Through today's agreement and previous agreements, the governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories will work together to improve access to quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services. This includes creating 300 new licensed early learning and child care spaces by the end of March 2026. All of these spaces will be provided exclusively by not-for-profit providers, including community and non-profit organizations as well as family day home providers. With federal funding of over \$51 million over the next five years, the Northwest Territories will also see a 50 per cent reduction in average parent fees for children under the age of six in licensed child care by the end of 2022.

This agreement will fund the essential service that licensed early learning and child care programs provide, while attracting, retaining, and growing a strong and skilled workforce of early childhood educators. Investments provided through this agreement will fund a retention incentive, and the development and implementation of a wage grid. The agreement will also support the development of an early learning and child care system that is inclusive of children from vulnerable or equity-seeking families, including children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports. It will support families' equitable access to high-quality, affordable early learning and child care.

The agreement also includes a clear commitment to continue to work collaboratively with Indigenous governments and stakeholders in the Northwest Territories to support Indigenous children in the territory having access to culturally appropriate, quality, and affordable early learning and child care.

Since 2015, the federal government has been helping make life more affordable for families. This includes programs like the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), which is increased annually to help families keep up with the costs of living and raising their children. The CCB puts more money into the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families with children and has helped lift 435,000 children out of poverty. The time for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system is now. The Government of Canada will continue to work with territories, provinces, and Indigenous partners across the country to make life easier and more affordable for families, grow the middle class, create jobs, help parents return to the workforce, and give children across the country a better start in life.

Quotes

“All families should have access to affordable child care. That is why we’re making \$10-a-day child care a reality across the country. Today’s agreement with the Northwest Territories is an important step forward to delivering on our Canada-wide early learning and child care system, which will create jobs, grow the middle class, and give our kids the best start in life.”

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

“One of the best investments governments can make to influence a child's life is to provide families with

the option to access high-quality early learning opportunities in their community. This investment in early learning and child care in the Northwest Territories means families will have access to more affordable child care – and in some instances, access to child care spaces for the first time. I look forward to continuing to work closely with the federal government as we transform the Northwest Territories early learning and child care system together to ensure the needs of northern families and children are met.”

The Hon. Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories

“Affordable, high-quality child care is both an economic and a social policy. It gives our children the best possible start in life and allows both mothers and fathers to work, which increases our workforce and grows the economy. Fee reductions in the coming year and the eventual average of \$10 a day will deliver thousands of dollars of savings to families with young children in the Northwest Territories. This agreement with the Government of the Northwest Territories will help families with the cost of living and strengthens our plan to ensure Canada has a strong recovery that leaves no one behind.”

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

“Today, the Northwest Territories joins ten other provinces and territories as we build our Canada-wide early learning and child care system, working towards an average of \$10-a-day child care in the next five years. This historic agreement will make a real difference for parents and children across the territory, support the economy, and grow a strong and skilled early childhood educator workforce. Today’s agreement is good news for families in the Northwest Territories.”

The Hon. Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

“This is a historic moment for the Northwest Territories. The signing of this agreement with the Government of Canada brings our territory a step closer to an early learning and child care system that recognizes, and is responsive to, the unique needs and cultures of the Northwest Territories. With a focus on availability, affordability, inclusivity, and high-quality child care, this agreement will improve families’ access to safe, inclusive environments for their children to learn, grow, and thrive. This investment into early childhood education will play a pivotal role in the long-term social and economic prosperity of our territory.”

R.J. Simpson, Northwest Territories’ Minister of Education, Culture and Employment

Quick Facts

- Earlier this year, the Government of Canada reached similar agreements with the governments of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Yukon, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and New Brunswick. The governments of Canada and Quebec also reached an asymmetric agreement to strengthen the early learning and child care system in the province.
- All new licensed spaces in the Northwest Territories will be among not-for-profit providers, including community and non-profit organizations as well as family day home providers.
- In addition to the federal contribution, the Northwest Territories currently invests approximately \$10 million in early learning and child care annually.
- The governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories will create an implementation committee that will monitor progress on child care commitments in consultation with stakeholders. The Government of Canada will be represented on this committee by the Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care.
- Budget 2021 provides new investments to build a high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care system across Canada. These investments total up to \$30 billion over five years, and combined with previous investments announced since 2015, \$9.2 billion every year, permanently.
- Through previous investments in early learning and child care, the Government of Canada helped to create over 40,000 more affordable child care spaces across the country prior to the pandemic, including spaces in the Northwest Territories.

- Investments in child care will benefit all Canadians. Studies show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between \$1.50 and \$2.80 in return.
- To promote greater gender equality at home and in the workplace, the Government of Canada has also introduced the Parental Sharing Benefit in 2019. This new measure provides an additional five weeks of Employment Insurance parental benefits when parents – including adoptive and same-sex parents – agree to share parental benefits.
- In addition to these investments, the Government of Canada is directly supporting parents, no matter how they choose to care for their children, through the Canada Child Benefit.

Region: Northwest Territories ^[3]

Tags: \$10 a day ^[4]

bilateral agreement ^[5]

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