

Province moves to reduce child-care fees by 25 per cent ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Parents and caregivers will see a reduction in child-care fees ahead of schedule as the Province accelerates its commitment to lower fees under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

The agreement calls for a 50 per cent reduction, on average, in fees by the end of this year. There will be an early initial decrease of 25 per cent, on average, retroactive to January 1, 2022, saving parents and caregivers an average of \$200 a month for a toddler in child care.

"Reducing the cost of child care by 25 per cent will make a real difference for families and caregivers of young children and Nova Scotians thinking about starting a family," said Premier Tim Houston. "Cost can be a barrier to accessing quality child care and may prevent parents from joining or rejoining the workforce. Acting now to reduce fees will help provide relief as we move toward a 50 per cent, on average, reduction in fees by the end of the year."

Parents will continue to pay their current rate until April 1, when they will choose to receive either a cheque from their centre reflecting the reduction from January to March or a credit. Parents will then pay the reduced rate going forward through centres that have joined the Canada-wide early learning and child-care system.

Under the Canada-wide agreement, fees for regulated child-care will drop to \$10 a day, on average, by March 31, 2026.

In addition to reduced fees, there will be 1,500 new not-for-profit child-care spaces beginning this fall, part of the plan for 9,500 new early learning and child-care spaces by March 31, 2026. The new spaces will be made available in more communities across Nova Scotia, with the goal of equitable access to affordable, accessible child care everywhere in the province. Communities with limited care options will soon have access to licensed child care for infants and toddlers, along with before and after school programs.

As the government works to add child-care spaces, it will also continue to implement Nova Scotia's Excellence in Early Childhood Education workforce strategy, which will result in higher wages for early childhood educators and free tuition, books and bursaries for hundreds of people taking early childhood educator courses.

"Along with the huge benefit of affordable child care, participation in the Canada-wide agreement means increasing wages and benefits for hundreds of early childhood educators," said Becky Druhan, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development. "We are creating hundreds of jobs and, at the same time, expanding child-care spaces across the province. Better pay and benefits will help keep the great early childhood educators we have and attract more people to the profession."

The Government of Canada is making a transformative investment to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system in partnership with provincial, territorial and Indigenous partners. This includes a historic federal investment of \$605 million for Nova Scotia from 2021-2022 to 2025-2026, in addition to a one-time investment of about \$10.9 million in 2021-2022 to support Nova Scotia's early childhood workforce.

The goal is to bring fees for regulated child care down to \$10 per day on average across Canada within the next five years. By the end of 2022, the Government of Canada is aiming to reduce average fees for regulated early learning and child care by 50 per cent to make care more affordable for families. Funding dedicated to the early childhood workforce supports initiatives that focus on recruitment, retention and professional development.

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. The reduction of fees announced today in Nova Scotia is an important step forward to delivering on our Canada-wide early learning and child care system, which will save families thousands of dollars each year, create jobs, grow the middle class, and give our kids the best start in life -.Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

The Government of Canada's goal is to ensure that in five years, all families in Canada, no matter where they live, will have access to regulated early learning and child care for an average of \$10 a day. The reduction of fees announced today in Nova Scotia is a meaningful step toward achieving that goal and will make a real difference for families across the province. We will continue to work with Nova Scotia to help ensure that children have access to the high-quality, affordable, and inclusive early learning and child care they need to succeed - Karina Gould, federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

As mom of two young children, a board member at a non-profit child-care centre and a researcher, I am so pleased to see the progress Nova Scotia is making toward the important vision of affordable, high-quality and inclusive early learning and child care. Access to high-quality early learning for our children has been essential in helping my family find balance and the fee reductions are so meaningful for families across the province. I am excited about the work underway to support early childhood educators, who work tirelessly to respond to the needs of young children and offer them the foundation for life-long learning - Jessie-Lee McIsaac, Assistant Professor and Tier II Canada Research Chair in Early Childhood: Diversity and Transitions, Mount Saint Vincent University

Quick Facts:

- a new organization is being created to oversee and manage the new Canada-wide system in the province; regulatory oversight will remain with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- parent fees will be reduced by an average of 25 per cent from 2019 levels; eligible centres will work with families on the January-March reimbursement or credit
- Nova Scotia invests \$132.6 million in early learning and child care annually, including \$54 million for pre-primary and over \$75 million for the child care sector; there are 330 licensed child-care centres in Nova Scotia and 14 licensed Family Home Child Care Agencies
- all for-profit or commercial child-care programs that were licensed and provincially funded as of July 13, 2021, are able to take part in the new Canada-wide system and receive funding to support items such as lower parent fees
- the cost of the 25 per cent reduction is estimated at \$35 million and will be funded through the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

Region: Nova Scotia ^[3]

Tags: child care fees ^[4]

\$10-a-day ^[5]

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