

New Roadmap for child care in BC ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from roadmap

BC is on the road to significant child care system building. If there was any lingering doubt, the pandemic has made clear that quality child care is essential for children, families, women, and communities and also for achieving social and economic equity.

In the 2020 provincial election the three major political parties each made significant child care commitments. It was the NDP, now BC's majority governing party, whose commitments most closely aligned with the \$10aDay Child Care Plan.

Since then, two significant and positive developments provide a strong basis for BC to accelerate implementation of a \$10aDay system by April 2026, while still requiring annual provincial budgets to prioritize increasing investments in child care.

First, on July 8, 2021, BC and Canada signed a historic bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Under this new agreement, the Government of Canada will invest \$3.2 billion by April 2026 to help improve licensed child care for children under six years of age in British Columbia. The bilateral commitments are consistent with the \$10aDay Plan, the BC government's election promises, and the implementation directions outlined in the first edition of this Roadmap.

Then, in September 2021—before the bilateral agreement could begin to make a difference—the federal government called an election. Voters were offered two very different approaches to child care: one in support of building a \$10aDay child care system across the country and the other a proposed tax credit targeted to lower income families. On election day, the vast majority of Canadians rejected tax schemes and expressed strong support for our vision of a publicly funded, inclusive, quality child care system.

With this unprecedented level of support in place, BC can and must move boldly and decisively to deliver \$10aDay child care for children and families. The public supports and demands no less. The new bilateral agreement includes funding to reduce parent fees, create more public, non-profit, and Indigenous spaces, and develop an educator wage grid. For the first time, the stars are aligned.

These new developments brought new opportunities to update our Roadmap

This second edition of the Roadmap integrates the new timelines, targets, and financial commitments in the bilateral agreement, including:

- 50 per cent average reduction in parent fees by December 2022 and \$10aDay fees by 2026;
- 30,000 new Indigenous, non-profit, and public child care spaces; and
- Funds to accelerate design and implementation of the key system building blocks, including development of an educator wage grid as part of an overall compensation strategy

However, the bilateral agreement develops but does not fund implementation of a wage grid, nor the funds required to ensure access to universal school-age care. These provincial commitments are central to the new system and remain the financial responsibility of the province of BC.

This Roadmap includes a two-phased timeline (see pages 8 and 9) for meeting the bilateral commitments:

- **PHASE 1** begins immediately and ends December 2022. During this phase, this Roadmap recommends that government use the existing Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI), with increased accountability measures, to fulfill BC's commitment under the bilateral agreement to reduce parent fees by an average of 50 per cent (see Section 1) while government designs the key building blocks (see Section 8) of the new system.
- **PHASE 2** is from January 2023 to March 2026, when child care is in the Ministry of Education. During this phase, the Roadmap outlines how government can reduce fees to \$10 a day by fully implementing the building blocks of the new public system, working with all current providers who choose to opt into a publicly-funded, community-planned, and accountable \$10aDay system.

Region: British Columbia ^[4]

Tags: advocacy ^[5]

policy ^[6]

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