

Armine is wrong about Doug Ford ^[1]

Author: Cleveland, Gordon

Source: [Childcarepolicy.net](https://childcarepolicy.net)

Format: Article

Publication Date: 30 Jan 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

I like Armine Yalnizyan. Usually, I agree with her. But I ^[3]don't appreciate her recent sympathy for Doug Ford ^[4]. She sympathizes with Doug Ford's reluctance to sign an agreement with the federal government to get billions of dollars per year to make licensed child care more affordable and more accessible for Ontario families. She agrees with Doug Ford that there is not enough money in the pot to lower fees on existing child care spaces AND expand child care capacity.

But she's wrong. There is enough money on the table to take giant steps towards making child care both affordable and accessible in the next five years. After all, right now Ontario only spends about \$2 billion per year on licensed child care. By 2025-26, the federal government will be providing over \$3 billion of additional funds for Ontario to spend on child care. That more than doubles Ontario's child care spending. Come on, Ontario! Sharpen your pencils! Can't you figure an intelligent way to spend an extra \$3 billion per year making child care more accessible and affordable for Ontario families?

Yes, it will be tough. Child care is expensive in Ontario, so cutting fees in half and then getting them down to \$10 a day will be expensive. I estimate that it will cost just over \$1 billion per year to cut current fees by half for existing child care spaces. And I estimate that the net cost of lowering fees on existing spaces to \$10 a day will be just over \$1.5 Billion. I've shared these calculations with Armine. That's a lot of money, but over the next five years, offering existing child care spaces at \$10 a day will eat up only about one-half of the cumulative total of \$10.2 Billion that Ontario will get from the federal government over that time. That leaves half of the federal money to devote to expansion and to lowering the fees on new spaces down to \$10 a day. And to increasing staff compensation so that new qualified staff can be recruited and existing staff will stay in the sector. And to all of the other aspects of building an affordable, accessible, high-quality system of child care in Ontario.

I calculate that the operating funding to lower fees to \$10 a day for 100,000 new child care spaces would be about \$1.2 Billion annually. That would bring Ontario's coverage rate up to 47% – there would be capacity for 47% of all Ontario children 0-5. That's not the 59% coverage that some other provinces – but not all – have promised. But 47% in Ontario means a lot more children have access to early childhood education than 47% would mean in other jurisdictions. Fortunately, we have very good full-day kindergarten for 4- and 5-year-olds. This was the same full-day kindergarten that Doug Ford wanted to dramatically downgrade back in 2019-2020 ^[5].

In fact, Doug Ford has a pretty poor record when it comes to supporting good-quality affordable early learning and child care. When he came into office back in 2018, he immediately cancelled Kathleen Wynne's decision to proceed with providing free child care to preschool-age children. That would have cost about \$1.6 Billion of provincial money. In its place, he devised the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit to provide a sprinkling of expenditure relief for the use of any type of child care. That provided very little support for families and did nothing to build a child care system. And then Ford and his ministers made plans to weaken full-day kindergarten but backed off at the last minute when they read the polls about how popular full-day kindergarten is. So, I don't trust Doug Ford's motives in delaying signing a child care agreement – he is not my child care knight in shining armour.

The federal government is offering provincial/territorial and Indigenous governments enough money to go a long way towards building an affordable, accessible Canada-wide child care system. Families need it; children need it – it's time for Doug Ford to stop playing games and sign up for child care.

Related link: [Doug Ford is the only premier who has yet to sign Ottawa's \\$10-a-day child-care deal. He's right to push back](#) ^[6]

Region: Ontario ^[7]

Tags: universal system ^[8]

Canada-wide agreements ^[9]

funding ^[10]

politics ^[11]

Source URL (modified on 2 Feb 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/22/02/armine-wrong-about-doug-ford>

Links

^[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/22/02/armine-wrong-about-doug-ford> ^[2] <https://childcarepolicy.net/armine-is-wrong-about-doug-ford/> ^[3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/02/doug-ford-only-premier-who-has-yet-sign-ottawa%E2%80%99s-10-day-child-care> ^[4]

<https://www.thestar.com/business/opinion/2022/01/25/doug-ford-is-the-only-premier-who-has-yet-to-sign-ottawas-10-a-day-child-care-deal-hes-right-to-push-back.html> ^[5]

<https://members.etfo.ca/AboutETFO/Publications/PositionPapers/PositionPapersDocuments/Dr%20Gordon%20Cleveland%20Kindergarten%20Research%20Report%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

^[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/02/doug-ford-only-premier-who-has-yet-sign-ottawa-s-10-day-child-care> ^[7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> ^[8]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9083> ^[9] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9207> ^[10] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> ^[11]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/politics>