

Ontario still hasn't shown how it would spend child-care funding, federal minister says ^[1]

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Source: The Canadian Press via Global News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 27 Jan 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The federal minister in charge of child-care efforts says Ontario still hasn't laid out how it would spend billions in funding allocated under a child-care deal.

Families Minister Karina Gould told the CBC radio show "Metro Morning" today that the lack of a detailed plan is holding up negotiations for a deal that aims to provide \$10-a-day child care.

Ontario is the only remaining jurisdiction without a child-care deal, and Premier Doug Ford told radio station Q104 Kenora earlier this week that the province is "very, very close" to reaching an agreement with Ottawa.

Gould says Ford's comments are "a good signal" that the province wants an agreement, but notes there's still a "considerable amount" of work to do before one can be achieved.

She says, however, that negotiations tend to move quickly once a plan has been submitted.

The Ontario government has said it is pushing to receive more than the \$10.2 billion offered by Ottawa under the national \$30-billion, five-year child-care plan to cut fees to an average of \$10 per day and cut them in half by next year.

Ford also told a different radio station, CJBQ in Belleville, this week that he wants to make sure the child-care funding continues beyond five years.

Gould called that argument "a bit of a red herring."

"We have money booked into the fiscal framework on an ongoing basis, so no other premier has had that issue," she told CBC.

"Ontario is the lone holdout here and every other province and territory has very clearly understood that the reason why we're signing a five-year agreement is because we want to meet those initial benchmarks and those initial objectives, and we want to be able to review them as we're going."

The minister said there is some pressure to reach a deal before the end of the fiscal year on March 31, or else Ontario won't receive more than a billion dollars earmarked for this year.

The upcoming provincial election could also delay a deal until the next provincial government is formed, she said.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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