

Feds contribute \$42 million toward affordable, improved childcare ^[1]

Minimum wages for early childhood educators will go to \$30 an hour.

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Source: Yukon News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 Jul 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The Yukon is the third jurisdiction in Canada to reach an agreement with the federal government over universal childcare.

The federal government said it will contribute \$42 million over the next five years in order to create new spaces, improve the quality of care and raise the minimum wage for early childhood educators.

“An affordable, Canada-wide early learning and childcare system is also good for parents. It’s good particularly for women with children who intend to not be forced to have to make a choice between going to work or taking care of their kids,” said federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Ahmed Hussen.

The agreement, signed July 22 by Hussen and Yukon Education Minister Jeanie McLean, expands on the territorial government’s recent introduction of a subsidy for licensed child care.

The Yukon is the third jurisdiction to sign an agreement with the federal government, following deals in Nova Scotia and British Columbia.

The federal government’s plan is to introduce universal child care that will cost \$10 a day on average, for children under age six.

Deputy Prime Minister Chystia Freeland also made an appearance during the announcement via video call.

In the Yukon, the agreement signed with the federal government also pledges the creation of 110 new regulated early learning and child care spaces within five years.

The agreement will also provide a minimum wage of nearly \$30 an hour to fully qualified early childhood educators.

During a press conference on Friday officials said the funds will also go toward ensuring that early child care in the territory is fully inclusive of children with disabilities and learning challenges.

The agreement also outlines a plan to work with Yukon First Nations to make sure Indigenous children have access to culturally relevant spaces.

“It’s going to help us to develop and offer more culturally inclusive programming for children. With this agreement, we will be able to not only continue but enhance our collaborative work with First Nations, Yukon University and the Government of Canada to support training and career development for members of the Yukon communities and health and social service program delivery,” said Silver.

Silver elaborated that some of the funding will be used to provide more childcare spaces within First Nations communities. He noted that during discussion at the quarterly Yukon Forum, education has been a main priority.

He highlighted the work of Tr’inke Zho, a childcare centre in Dawson who provide care for children from 1-12 years of age. The centre also has an Aboriginal Head Start program that provides half-day tradition and culture-based learning programming for First Nation, Inuit and Metis children under five.

The federal funds will also accompany the territorial government raising minimum wages for early childhood educators to just under \$30 an hour.

“I think that our childcare providers have been underpaid for a long time,” said McLean. “I think that increasing the wage to a minimum of \$30 is long overdue, they provide important services to us as Yukoners. I am thrilled that they’re going to be compensated in the way that they should for the professional work that they do.”

Region: Yukon Territory ^[3]

Tags: Canada-wide agreement ^[4]
universal system ^[5]

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