

'New phase of negotiations:' Ontario close to landing \$10/day childcare deal ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Ontario and the federal government have entered a "new phase of negotiations" that could see a \$10-a-day childcare agreement reached within weeks, federal sources tell CTV News Toronto.

After months of negotiations Education Minister Stephen Lecce said the provincial government has handed over all the necessary documents required by the federal government that outlines how Ontario intends to reduce fees and create new childcare spaces with the federal funds.

"All details, all plans requested by the federal government are with them," Lecce told reporters on Tuesday. "We look forward to getting this deal as soon as possible to save families money."

A spokesperson for Karina Gould, the federal minister responsible for the child care file, said the Ontario government sent the first draft of the province's action plan late last week and the plan now allows the two sides to start discussing the specifics of the deal.

"The submission of the first draft of the action plan has allowed for negotiations to move to the next phase where officials can now work to ensure that the plan meets federal objectives on space creation, affordability, data and reporting, workforce supports, inclusivity and quality within the parameters of the funding allocation for Ontario," a spokesperson for Gould said.

When asked how quickly a deal could be signed, a federal source said other provinces were able to reach an agreement roughly three weeks after the government received the actions plan.

While Premier Doug Ford re-emphasized, on Tuesday, that the province is "very, very close to getting a deal" federal officials stressed that time is running out.

The federal government allocated \$10.2 billion to help Ontario drive down the daily cost of childcare – more than a billion of which was intended for the 2021-22 fiscal year which ends of March 31.

Federal officials warned that if a deal isn't reached before the end of the month the first-year funding could "lapse." While the funding wouldn't be pulled entirely, the federal government would have to embark on a complicated accounting process to reallocate the money to the 2022-23 fiscal year – making the Ontario deal unique compared to other provinces and territories.

Ford said the government remains committed to reaching a deal, but did not provide a timeline.

"We're going to get this deal, Just stay tuned," Ford told the Ontario legislature. "Hopefully it will be sooner than later."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: \$10 a day ^[4]

federal agreement ^[5]

system building ^[6]

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