

Backgrounder: Ontario's child care action plan puts families first

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Improved access and financial relief for parents, stability for the system

Author: Government of Ontario

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpted from backgrounder

On March 28, 2022, Ontario reached a \$13.2 billion agreement with the federal government on funding for and the terms of a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program. The new program will lower child care costs and improve access, and quality across Ontario's child care and early years sector.

The province's made-in-Ontario action plan for meeting its commitments under the new agreement takes a phased approach and advances what is most important to families. The plan is based on five pillars: improved affordability, improved access, sustaining high-quality services, inclusion, and enhanced data and reporting.

Improved affordability

As a first step, all Ontario families with children five years old and younger in participating licensed child care centres will see their fees reduced, up to 25 per cent, to a minimum of \$12 per day, retroactive to April 1, 2022.

In December 2022, parents will see another reduction. In total, fees for families will be reduced, on average, by 50 per cent, relieving parents of \$1.1 billion in child care costs.

In September 2024, families will see further fee reductions, culminating in a final reduction to an average of \$10-a-day child care by September 2025.

To ensure a sustainable future that protects Ontario taxpayers and puts parents first, the Canada-Ontario agreement also ensures that the cost of implementing the agreement will continue to be monitored by Canada and Ontario with an automatic review in year three.

Improved access

Ontario will address increasing demand for child care by creating 86,000 new, high quality child care spaces. This includes more than 15,000 new spaces already created since 2019.

New licensed child care spaces will include a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit settings to provide families with choice and flexibility.

Sustaining high-quality services

Ontario will improve compensation for all Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in licensed child care, including RECEs providing child care for children six to 12 years old.

This agreement also supports the recruitment of new early childhood educators.

Ontario will ensure a qualified workforce supply to implement the province's pedagogy for the early years to help safeguard the quality of child care programs and support system stability and sustainability.

Inclusion

Ontario will introduce reforms that support the needs of diverse and underserved populations, including low-income, francophone, Indigenous, Black, other racialized and newcomer communities, as well as vulnerable and special needs children.

Enhanced data and reporting

Ontario is already a leader in child care data collection and analytics. The new federal program is an opportunity to enhance sector performance by enabling Ontario to identify and evaluate the impact of these reforms on individual children and families.

Under the federal agreement, Ontario will report regularly on its progress in meeting federal requirements with enhanced data collection and analytics capabilities.

Lowering Fees, Improving Affordability: Examples – Comparison Across Regions

Yasmin in York Region

Yasmin lives in York Region and has two children. She currently pays \$72/day in child care fees for her 18 month-old son Jacob (toddler age group), and \$31/day for her 5 year-old daughter Isobel.

If her child care centre enrolls in the program by December 31, her fees for Jacob and Isobel will be reduced by 25 per cent to \$54.00 and \$23.25.

For 2022, she will get a refund of \$3,528 in fees for Jacob and \$1,519 for Isobel, retroactive to April 1, 2022.

Andrew in Sudbury

Andrew lives in Sudbury and currently pays \$31/day in child care fees for his 18 month-old daughter Renee (toddler age group), and \$11/day for his 5 year-old son Germain.

If his child care centre enrolls in the program by December 31, his fees for Renee will be reduced by 25 per cent to \$23.25. Fees for Germain will remain the same.

For 2022, he will get a refund of \$1,519 in fees for Renee, retroactive to April 1, 2022.

Charmaine in Durham Region

Charmaine lives in Durham and has two children. She currently pays \$52/day in child care fees for her 18 month-old son Franklin (toddler age group), and \$25/day for her 5 year-old daughter Simone.

If her child care centre enrolls in the program by December 31, her fees for Franklin and Simone will be reduced by 25 per cent to \$39.00 and \$18.75.

For 2022, she will get a refund of \$2,548 in fees for Franklin and \$1,225 for Simone, retroactive to April 1, 2022.

Sameer in Halton Region

Sameer lives in Halton and currently pays \$63/day in child care fees for his 18 month-old daughter Tina (toddler age group), and \$27/day for his 5 year-old son Amar.

If his child care centre enrolls in the program by December 31, his fees will be reduced by 25 per cent to \$47.25 and \$20.25.

For 2022, he will get a refund of \$3,087 in fees for Tina and \$1,323 for Amar, retroactive to April 1, 2022.

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