

Advocates happy with child-care deal, still seeking increased pay for ECE workers ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Ontario government has signed a child-care deal with the federal government that will deliver an average of \$10 a day childcare by 2025.

"This is real money that will stay within the pockets of families this year to help with everything else," said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at a news conference in Brampton on Monday morning.

Ontario is the last province to make a deal with Trudeau's \$30 billion national child-care program which is valued at \$13.2 billion over 6 years.

"I'm very excited that Ontario has finally joined the national child-care program. It's just so excellent for children and families across Ontario," said Kara Pihlak, the executive director of the Oak Park co-op children's centre.

Pihlak along with a group of other locals has been advocating for changes within the childcare system including wage increases for early childcare educators.

Premier Doug Ford announced fees will be reduced by 25 per cent for all Ontario families with children five years old and younger in licensed childcare centres, retroactive to April 1. Parent rebates retroactive to that date will be provided in May.

In December there will be a 50 per cent reduction in costs for 2022.

Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, an expert in early childhood education said she hopes, "Ontario takes into consideration the different circumstances of each family," adding, "I hope it continues to provide some support to families that actually need childcare the most."

Though many parents and advocates are pleased to see affordable changes being made, some child care advocates believe there is still more work that needs to be done.

Pihlak would like to see a wage increase for early childcare educators to recruit and retain employees in the province.

"The issue is there are not enough spaces already for childcare and if this Ford government is wanting to build 80,000 child-care spaces, we already don't have enough early childhood educators and we're not going to be able to fulfill that promise to families," she said.

The child-care deal also includes the creation of 86,000 child-care spaces, 15,000 of which have already been in place since 2019.

"What good is saving money on fees if there isn't a spot, to begin with?" said Pihlak, hoping to hear further details from the province on an increase in pay for early childhood educators.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: \$10-a-day child care ^[4]

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