

Child care fees on track to drop substantially in most big cities, but not all are projected to meet targets: New report ^[1]

Author: Child Care Now

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EXCERPTS

Child care fees in Canadian cities are on track to drop significantly, but some provincial child care action plans fall short of meeting the federal government's target to bring down fees by an average of 50 per cent, says a new fee study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

Commenting on the report, Child Care Now's Executive Director, Morna Ballantyne, said the problem is that provincial and territorial governments are taking a variety of approaches to bringing down the price of child care services and not all deliver on the federal government's stated objective.

"The federal government was clear in its 2021 federal budget that it wanted average parent fees to be cut by half, however, several provinces are using their share of federal money to make changes to their provincial parent fee subsidy systems instead of increasing direct operational funding to operators so that they can bring down parent fees at the source."

For preschool-aged child care (the most common type), seven of 26 cities included in the analysis will meet or exceed the 50 per cent fee reduction target by the end of 2022. Fifteen will be close, missing the mark by \$20 to \$100 a month. Four cities will miss their targets for this age group by more than \$100 a month: Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Charlottetown.

The report authors note that the 50 per cent fee reduction is the first concrete step in the multi-year Canada-wide plan to build an affordable, accessible, and high quality child care system, but many other policy changes must be implemented simultaneously.

"While the move towards affordable parent fees is headed in the right direction in most jurisdictions, the problem of too little licensed child care will get bigger. Meeting the increased demand will require concrete expansion strategies featuring public capital funding and—most importantly—concrete support for under-appreciated early childhood educators, including sufficient pay to retain them, improved working conditions and educational opportunities," adds Martha Friendly, report co-author and Executive Director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Region: Canada ^[3]

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