

# Nova Scotia child care system building must stay on track <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

KJIPUKTUK/HALIFAX—Child care fees are on track to drop substantially across Canada but the rollout across provinces and territories will vary. The federal government promised a 50% fee reduction by the end of 2022 in its 2021 federal budget. According to a report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives this morning, Nova Scotia is on the right track – falling short of the target by just under \$100 for each age.

“The impact that these fee reductions will have on families in Nova Scotia is monumental but the benefit will not be equitable,” says Nikki Jamieson, Coordinator of Child Care Now Nova Scotia. “Importantly, this report also underlines the need for a provincially set fee. The fact that for-profits charge 15% more for preschool fees than not-for-profits means that the reduction will not have the same impact on families across the province.”

The report also reminds us that, as child care fees drop substantially, increased demand for access to child care will come into focus.

“A drop in the price of licensed child care will result in an increase in demand across Nova Scotia but we can’t increase the availability of programs without more qualified early childhood educators and solving the current crisis in retention and recruitment,” says Jamieson. “Fee reductions are great, but we need to remember that there will be no spaces without Early Childhood Educators. Nova Scotia risks missing the mark with compensation, benefits, and wages still not being promised until the Fall.”

Child Care Now Nova Scotia says lowering parent fees is only a first step to building a truly affordable high-quality child care system that all families can access regardless of where they live, and regardless of their circumstances. The advocacy group says the provincial government must provide sufficient operational funding to service providers so that the quality of services are not dependent on parent revenue.

“Even after the promised reductions are delivered, the fees are still unattainable for so many. A 50% reduction on the 6th highest fees in the country, is still completely unaffordable to many Nova Scotians, especially considering the price differences between centres” says Amber Rehill, parent and member of the Child Care Now Steering Committee. “The need for a provincially set fees to ensure that families are all benefitting from these decreases is critically important now.”

Game Changer: Will provinces and territories meet the new federal child care targets? Canadian child care fees 2021 is the 8th annual report that CCPA released surveying child care fees in cities across Canada. This year it zooms in on the details when it comes to meeting the targets and goals related to fees set out in the bilateral agreement.

“Nova Scotia will come close to meeting the 50% fee target reduction for all ages in licensed care,” says Christine Saulnier, Nova Scotia Director of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. “We shall continue to pay very close attention to the details of implementation ensuring that families ultimately get access to affordable, high-quality child care that is provided by early childhood educators with decent working conditions, living wages and benefits, and available in communities across the province.”

**Region:** Nova Scotia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** child care fees <sup>[4]</sup>

affordable child care <sup>[5]</sup>

federal budget <sup>[6]</sup>

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