

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers meet to mark progress and advance shared priorities in early learning and child care ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

BURNABY, BC, July 12, 2022 /CNW/ - Federal, provincial and territorial ministers most responsible for early learning and child care gathered today to advance shared priorities in early learning and child care. The meeting takes place one year after the federal government signed the first Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with British Columbia.

The meeting was co-chaired by the Honourable Karina Gould, Canada's Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and the Honourable Natalie Jameson, Prince Edward Island's Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning and Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Early learning and child care is important for families across Canada. Ministers marked the historic and collective achievements of the past year that has seen meaningful progress made toward high-quality, affordable, flexible, inclusive, and accessible early learning and child care across Canada, recognizing the responsibility of provinces and territories for the design and delivery of early learning and child care systems in their respective jurisdictions.

The federal government's recent \$27 billion investment over five years builds on the many years of significant work and ongoing investments that provinces and territories have dedicated to advancing early learning and child care. Federal, provincial and territorial governments are working toward the shared goal of average \$10-a-day early learning and child care by March 2026, including a 50% reduction in average fees for regulated early learning and child care spaces by the end of 2022.

Ministers noted that federal, provincial and territorial governments will work toward making early learning and child care, including community-based services, more affordable for families, support the early childhood workforce, increase participation in the workforce, including for women, and help give children the best start in life.

Ministers also acknowledged that creating new early learning and child care spaces is essential to ensuring access to child care for families, which is why federal, provincial and territorial governments have committed to the collective goal of creating over 250,000 new spaces across the country by March 2026.

During the meeting, Quebec's Minister of Families, Mathieu Lacombe, shared lessons learned in establishing Quebec's affordable and accessible child care system, which marks its 25th anniversary this year. Provincial and territorial ministers also shared their experiences and successes in meeting the unique child care needs of their local communities in their early learning and child care systems.

Ministers agreed to establish a Federal, Provincial and Territorial Forum of Ministers Most Responsible for Early Learning and Child Care to continue to meet, share information and advance shared priorities. Quebec will participate in the Forum as an observer.

Note: Mindful of its desire to preserve its exclusive jurisdiction over child care, Quebec does not recognize the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care System and is not involved in any of the associated work. Quebec intends to maintain sole responsibility for the planning, organization, delivery and rollout of early learning and child care services in the province. A forerunner in early learning and child care, Quebec established its own network of educational child care services 25 years ago, from which many countries have drawn inspiration. Quebec will participate as an observer in the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Forum of Ministers and remains open to sharing its best practices.

Quotes

"Just one year ago, the first Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement was signed with British Columbia. Since then, the federal government has signed agreements with all provinces and territories, making a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system a reality. Today's meeting highlighted the importance of collaboration, and I look forward to working with my provincial and

territorial partners to support families across the country and ensure every child has the best possible start in life."

– The Honourable Karina Gould, federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development

"A great deal has been accomplished over the past year. Collaborating with federal partners, provinces and territories are building up their early learning and child care systems by strengthening the workforce, and increasing access to quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive child care. Together, we are striving to give children the best possible start in life and supporting families when they need it the most."

– The Honourable Natalie Jameson, Prince Edward Island's Minister of Education and Lifelong Learning and Minister responsible for the Status of Women

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

government ^[5]

Canada-wide agreement ^[6]

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