

Celebrating the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement with Nova Scotia ^[1]

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Source: Newswire

Format: Press release

Publication Date: 13 Jul 2022

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

GATINEAU, QC, July 13, 2022 /CNW/ - Child care is not just a social policy—it is also an economic policy. Access to high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive child care will grow the economy, allow more women to enter the workforce and give every child in Canada the best start in life. That's why the Government of Canada signed agreements with each province and territory to implement a Canada-wide early learning and child care system.

Today, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Karina Gould, joined Nova Scotia's Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development, Becky Druhan, to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the signing of the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

As part of the agreement with the Government of Nova Scotia, the Government of Canada is providing \$605 million over five years to help improve licensed early learning and child care for children in the province. Through these investments, the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia are working together to improve access to high-quality, affordable, flexible, and inclusive early learning and child care programs and services, with the goal of ensuring that Nova Scotia families have access to licensed child care for an average of \$10-a-day by March 31, 2026.

Through the Canada-Nova Scotia Canada-wide agreement, the province has reduced average child care fees for licensed centres that are part of the Canada-Wide and Early Learning Childcare System in Nova Scotia by 25 per cent, retroactive to January 1, 2022, representing a significant step in reaching a 50 per cent reduction in average fees by the end of 2022.

The province has also recently announced that 1,500 new licensed early learning and child care spaces will be created across Nova Scotia by December 31, 2022. These spaces are part of the plan for 9,500 new licensed child care spaces expected to be created across Nova Scotia by March 31, 2026. As work is being done to add child care spaces, Nova Scotia will continue to implement Nova Scotia's Excellence in Early Childhood Education workforce strategy, which will result in higher wages and more learning opportunities for early childhood educators, resulting in a more professionalized and stable workforce.

In addition, Nova Scotia is supporting:

- the early childhood workforce, through education and professional development opportunities, as well as the development of a wage grid;
- the inclusion of children with disabilities and children needing enhanced or individual supports, with the goal that all licensed early learning and child care programs will offer spaces to meet their needs; enhanced data collection and reporting; and,
- the assurance that First Nations / Indigenous children in Nova Scotia will have access to affordable, high-quality and culturally responsive early learning and child care.

Building a child care system that works for all families in every region of the country is a key part of the plan to make life more affordable for families while creating good jobs and growing the economy. Nearly all of Canada's provinces and territories, including Nova Scotia, have already seen reductions in child care fees, and, by the end of 2022, average fees for licensed early learning and child care spaces will be cut in half across the country.

Quotes

"I'm thrilled about the great progress we've made in the past year since the signing of the Canada-wide agreement with Nova Scotia. By working with the Government of Nova Scotia, high-quality, affordable and inclusive child care is becoming a reality in the province."

Quick Facts

- Nova Scotia signed its Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement on July 13, 2021.
- The current average child care fee in Nova Scotia is \$36-a-day. With a 50% average fee reduction by the end of 2022, families in the province could save up to an estimated average of \$4,690 per child thanks to the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and an average of approximately \$6,800 a year per child once fees reach \$10/day.
- In response to requests from provinces and territories, and to support the implementation of the Canada-wide early learning and child care system, Budget 2022 proposes to provide \$625 million over four years, beginning in 2023–2024, for an Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund. This funding will enable provinces and territories to make additional child care investments, including the building of new facilities.
- Recognizing that early childhood educators are at the very heart of a high-quality, affordable, flexible and inclusive child care system, wage grids and/or additional training supports for early childhood educators are part of all Canada-wide agreements with provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec which has an asymmetrical agreement.
- As part of Budget 2021, the Government of Canada made a transformative investment of over \$27 billion over five years to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system with the provinces and territories. Combined with other investments, including investments in Indigenous early learning and child care, up to \$30 billion over five years will be provided in support of early learning and child care.
- In total, the Government of Canada is aiming to create approximately 250,000 new child care spaces through Canada-wide agreements with provinces and territories, and has already achieved its goal of creating 40,000 more affordable child care spaces before 2020 through the 2017–2018 to 2019–2020 Early Learning and Child Care Agreements. These new licensed spaces will be created predominantly among not-for-profit, public and family-based child care providers.
- Investments in child care will benefit everyone across Canada. Studies show that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the broader economy receives between \$1.50 and \$2.80 in return.

Region: Nova Scotia ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

Canada wide agreement ^[5]

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