

# On affordable child care, Ontario's non-profit programs are leading the way <sup>[1]</sup>

Fee rebates and reductions depend on child-care programs opting in. That's why non-profits are meeting the moment with a profound vision.

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## AVAILABILITY

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

## EXCERPTS

For Ontario families, the new Canada-wide child-care system should mean big savings. And Ontario's not-for-profit child-care programs are working collaboratively with all levels of government to ensure affordability for families.

Parents are eligible for retroactive payments on child-care fees from April 1, 2022. A family of an infant in Toronto could be eligible for more than \$4,000 this year. The average family of a toddler in Ottawa could see \$2,821 in savings. The average family of a preschooler in Vaughan is eligible for \$2,697. Families using before- and after-school care for children under six years would see over \$1,000 in savings. Savings will increase in 2023, with plans to cut fees in half.

But parents' fee rebates and reductions depend on child-care programs opting in. That's why non-profit child-care programs are meeting this moment with leadership and a profound vision for the future of child care in Ontario. Communities can count on the not-for-profit child-care sector to make this life-changing transformation of affordable care a reality for families.

The government's rollout plan confirms 2022 as a "transitional year," committing that "operators will be compensated based on the actual costs of the rebates to families," regardless of the differences in fees across the sector. In 2023, programs will submit their budgets to municipalities and work together to ensure that all reasonable costs are covered, while also ensuring accountability for public dollars. For the most part, the strong accountability mechanisms in the agreement are already in place for not-for-profit operators – something that taxpayers should applaud.

Seventy-five per cent of Ontario's child-care spaces are provided on a public or not-for-profit basis. From large multi-service organizations, to regional not-for-profit child-care programs, to small parent co-operatives and not-for-profit home child-care agencies, thousands of not-for-profits are in the process of opting in to the new system by the Sept. 1 deadline.

Transitioning into the new system is not without its challenges – the biggest being the ongoing workforce shortage in child care, which will make meeting the demand for increased spaces difficult. To serve more families, we must solve the workforce crisis by finally ensuring decent work and pay right across the child-care sector.

But while the agreement's new wage improvement funds fall short of what is needed to ensure decent work, both the federal and provincial governments have promised that further action to support the workforce is coming. And not-for-profit child-care operators, alongside advocates and the workforce themselves, will continue to push for a workforce strategy and provincial wage scale that finally reflects educators' real value.

After a 50-year struggle, a more publicly funded and managed system will make all this possible: affordability for families, decent work for educators, and enough spaces for all who need them. And not-for-profit programs will be working flat out to make it happen in big cities, small towns and rural communities right across Ontario.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability <sup>[4]</sup>

Canada-wide agreements <sup>[5]</sup>

public management <sup>[6]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/08/affordable-child-care-ontario%E2%80%99s-non-profit-programs-are-leading-way> <sup>[2]</sup>

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