

# Parents of kids up to kindergarten age will soon save up to \$550 a month on child-care fees, ministry says <sup>[1]</sup>

Fee reductions set to take effect Dec. 1

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## AVAILABILITY

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

## EXCERPTS

B.C. has announced cuts to monthly child-care fees for families with children who are kindergarten age or younger.

The Ministry of Education and Child Care said Friday the fee reduction will save families up to \$550 per child, per month, depending on whether their child is in group care or family-based care.

The reductions take effect Dec. 1 and will affect families of roughly 69,000 children across the province, the ministry said.

Child-care providers running more than 96 per cent of eligible spaces have already signed up to participate in the provincial program, meaning families don't need to apply for the new savings — the reduction should be automatically reflected on their monthly bill come December.

The ministry said the savings for families are on top of earlier reductions of \$350 per month for children under three years old in group care — meaning their fees will be cut by a total of up to \$900 a month.

Katrina Chen, B.C.'s minister of state responsible for child care, said the fee reduction program is "a huge achievement."

"When you think about \$900 per month, per child, that is huge," said Chen. "To all the parents, I want to tell you as a mother myself, we feel you. We feel you and understand that child care is critical for our economy, for our young children and for our families' well-being."

She thanked child-care providers who have partnered with the government, but could not immediately estimate the number of unlicensed daycare operations in B.C.

Eligibility for the new cuts is not income based. The ministry said "kindergarten age" means children who are five or six years old.

Lower- and middle-income families are still eligible for income-based support for children up to age 12 through the Affordable Child Care Benefit launched in 2018, the ministry noted.

At a news conference in Burnaby, B.C., on Friday, Education and Child Care Minister Jennifer Whiteside said the fee reductions will bring the average daily cost of child care in the province to \$21 by the end of the year, down from the average of \$53 before the government's child-care initiatives began in 2018.

Whiteside added the government's election promise of \$10-a-day child care is underway and will result in the creation of 12,500 more spaces for children by Dec. 31.

Karina Gould, the federal minister of families, child care and social development, said the federal-provincial partnerships on child care are a "nation-building endeavour" similar in transformation to the introduction of medicare in Canada.

"I like to talk about child care as a home run because it's good for our kids," she said. "It's good for our families and it's really good for our economy."

Women most often feel the brunt of high child-care costs, and lower fees will help family finances and allow parents to pursue careers and other opportunities, Gould said.

B.C. was the first province to sign on to the federal government's \$30-billion child-care plan and will receive \$3.2 billion over five years.

**Related link:** Families will save big as child care fees cut as much as \$550 more per month <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** child care <sup>[5]</sup>

\$10aDay <sup>[6]</sup>

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