

# Alberta childcare gets boost with funding for private facilities <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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

### Excerpts

The Alberta government will be able to support 22,500 private childcare facilities under a new agreement with the Canadian government.

In an announcement in Edmonton Tuesday, the new Cost Control Framework and For-Profit Expansion Plan agreement between both governments saw the inclusion of private spaces, something that wasn't in place before.

"Private operators, who make up more than 60 per cent of our mixed market here in this province, play a valuable role in the sector," said Alberta children's services minister Mickey Amery.

"We want a system that welcomes and embraces their full participation."

Amery says the framework will save parents between \$450 and \$635 per month.

An initial deal of \$3.8 billion over five years was signed in November 2021 between Alberta and Canada and said that 42,500 non-profit spaces would be created by 2025-26.

"We fought hard for a deal that would fully include our valued private operators because we knew the success of this program relies on the innovation and creativity of these, oftentimes, female entrepreneurs who serve families and kids across the province," said the minister of municipal affairs Rebecca Shulz. "This framework was the next step in that agreement, and I'm glad to see we can now move ahead on creating more spaces."

The creation of 22,500 licensed private child-care spaces makes the total 68,700, with the aim of being finished by the end of March 2026.

Of the 22,500 new spaces, 1,600 are private spaces that will be eligible for funding "almost immediately," with up to 2,000 more facilities being eligible as soon as licensing requirements are completed.

"Today's announcement highlights our commitment to on-the-ground child care providers in Alberta. Our expansion plan will create spaces for parents and get children off waitlists while ensuring the reasonable use of tax dollars. We want more families with children in licensed spaces to be able to reap the benefits of more affordable child care," said federal minister of families, children and social development Karina Gould.

In September 2022, more than 112,000 spaces in Alberta for children up to kindergarten age have been eligible for funding supports in both private and non-profit licensed child-care programs.

The province says through the Alberta-Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement (ACELCC) agreement, child-care fees for children aged zero to kindergarten have been reduced by half. It says expanding more spaces will help reduce child-care fees for parents to an average of \$10 per day by 2026.

Meanwhile, Alberta NDP critic for children's services Rakhi Pancholi says it was good news but adds the UCP's "foot-dragging" created stress for Albertans and child-care operators.

"From the day the federal child care deal was signed, the UCP's implementation has been incompetent, confused and poorly communicated to child-care operators and educators. This has created uncertainty and delays in accessing affordable child care for parents that could have been avoided if the UCP was willing to do the work to make this successful," Pancholi said in a statement.

"The UCP has never demonstrated a real commitment to the principles of affordable, quality, accessible child care. They cancelled the made-in-Alberta \$25-a-day child-care program, increased costs to operators and parents, had to be dragged by Alberta families to sign the federal deal and threatened to use the Sovereignty Act against it. Albertans can't trust Danielle Smith and a UCP government to successfully achieve \$10-a-day child care for Alberta families."

The federal government brought in a national child-care plan that would cut daycare fees by an average of 50 per cent by the end of 2022 — and down to an average of \$10 per day by 2026.

Through its 2021 budget, the Canadian government made an investment of \$27 billion over five years to build a Canada-wide early

learning and child learning system.

As part of the country-wide early learning and child care system, the feds aim to create around 250,000 new child care spaces across Canada by March 2026

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

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

spaces <sup>[5]</sup>

fees <sup>[6]</sup>

CWELCC <sup>[7]</sup>

affordability <sup>[8]</sup>

availability <sup>[9]</sup>

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