

# Day care for less than \$10: How Canada is easing the burden for parents<sup>[1]</sup>

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts

As Susana Ibarra’s maternity leave was ending and she was preparing to return to her office outside Toronto, she still faced a big challenge: finding care for her son and then figuring out how to pay for it.

Finally, after putting him on a dozen or so waiting lists, she landed a spot. Even better, it came at a discounted fee of 600 Canadian dollars, or \$450, a month.

The low cost was the result of an ambitious day care plan expanding across Canada, intended to drastically cut fees that supporters say will address one of the most vexing problems facing many working parents.

...

The national day care plan was introduced two years ago by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government with a goal of steadily pushing down child care costs so that, by 2026, tens of thousands of child care slots would be available at daily fees of 10 Canadian dollars, roughly 200 dollars a month, or less.

By comparison, in large urban areas like Toronto or Vancouver, day care can cost 1,200 Canadian dollars or more per month, or about 60 dollars a day.

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Working with the country’s provinces, which are responsible for delivering education and child care services, the federal government plans to spend up to 30 billion Canadian dollars to create a total of 250,000 new low-cost child care spaces, mostly in nonprofit or public day care centers and family-based providers.

Child care providers use government financing to reduce their fees over time until they reach the 10 Canadian dollars a day threshold.

Day care centers in five of Canada’s 13 less populated provinces and territories have already lowered fees to that level, while the remaining provinces, including Ontario, have cut their fees by half on the road to reaching 10 dollars per day.

So far, about 52,000 reduced-cost child care slots have been created across the country under the program.

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Canada’s program was modeled, in part, after a similar initiative in Quebec that started 25 years ago. Parents there pay around 9 Canadian dollars a day for government-subsidized day care.

Supporters say the program has allowed more women to work. Nearly 90 percent of women in Quebec are in the work force, the highest labor participation rate among women of any Canadian province.

...

The surge in demand has amplified existing problems across Canada’s child care sector, including labor shortages and concerns about low pay. Some critics worry that the Trudeau government is investing a significant amount of money in a program that will serve a relatively small number of children.

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

**Tags:** [affordability](#) <sup>[4]</sup> [female labour force participation](#) <sup>[5]</sup> [CWELCC](#) <sup>[6]</sup> [labour shortage](#) <sup>[7]</sup> [child care expansion](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

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