

Alberta moves closer to \$10/day licensed child care ^[1]

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Excerpts

Alberta has reached an average fee of \$15-a-day for licensed child care as of January 1, 2024, says Employment and Social Development Canada.

The reduction in fees means that some Alberta families could now save up to \$13,700 annually per child in regulated child care compared to what they paid prior to the introduction of the Canada-wide system of early-learning and child care.

Unlike other provinces, the Alberta government is relying heavily on parent fee subsidies to make child care more affordable instead of significantly improving operational funding for licensed programs.

“It is a problem that the Alberta government is not introducing a low parent fee set by the provincial government,” said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now. “A more efficient, simpler and more transparent approach is to set a low maximum fee scaled to household income and for governments to provide additional sufficient public funding directly to operators so that they have sufficient funds to run high quality programs.”

The Alberta government is using federal funds to cover the costs of making licensed child care more affordable. The province has received \$1.8 billion in federal transfers for early learning and child care for three fiscal years starting April 1, 2021. The funds are earmarked for lowering fees, improving the quality of programs, and increasing the number of spaces available to parents. Child Care Now estimates that the province has spent less than half of what it could have under the various provincial-federal funding arrangements.

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