

Media Release: Child care advocates say Budget 2024 takes a pivotal step towards making \$10aDay available to all ^[1]

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Canada's child care advocates say the federal budget tabled today will make \$10 a day child care much more available across Canada.

"The federal government's new \$1 billion federal child care expansion loan program, and \$60 million in grants will give public and not-for-profit licensed child care operators much-needed direct financial support to build new spaces," says Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now, Canada's national child care advocacy association. "And it's really good news that the program will get up and running quickly, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation."

Child Care Now also welcomes the increase in federal funding (over and above the large child care transfers to provinces and territories announced in 2021) to increase the number of qualified early childhood educators. Budget 2024 promises \$10 million over two years for training initiatives, and a student loan forgiveness for graduates of early childhood education programs who choose to work in rural and remote communities.

Ballantyne says the commitment in the budget to supporting the early learning and child care (ELCC) sector workforce is critical to the success of a high quality Canada-wide ELCC system. She says she is glad to see in the budget that the federal government will push the provinces and territories to fairly compensate early childhood educators for the important work they do, and to ensure they have access to good pension coverage similar to the defined benefit plan recently announced by the Nova Scotia government.

"Expansion of the child care sector must go hand-in-hand with expansion of the child care workforce and this budget supports a comprehensive federal/provincial/territorial recruitment and retention strategy to address fair wages, pensions and working conditions," says Ballantyne.

Child Care Now is also pleased that the challenges in early learning and child care will be addressed by a federal Sectoral Table on the Care Economy.

Ballantyne applauds the federal government for integrating the development of new not-for-profit and public child care facilities into the federal government's housing expansion program.

"It makes such good sense to locate child care programs close to where families live, and to leverage the federal housing program and public lands to expand the supply of child care," says Ballantyne.

Ballantyne says Budget 2024 shows the federal government recognizes the critical importance of accelerating the expansion of low fee high quality early learning and child care to those who don't yet have access because of space limitations.

"The federal government's early learning and child care program is enormously popular and tens of thousands of parents are on wait lists to join," says Ballantyne. "We commend the federal government for taking direct action to address the space shortage."

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