

Families reeling after Alberta ends child-care subsidy ^[1]

Province moving to flat monthly fee of \$326 on April 1

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

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While Jones touted the flat fee as a measure to ensure affordability and predictability, he put less emphasis on the end of the Child Care Subsidy Program on March 31 for infants to children of kindergarten age. The ministry's annual report for the 2023-24 fiscal year said 68,900 children in that age range received some level of subsidy.

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Robyn Sloboda's two boys are 20 months and four years old. The family pays \$48 a month for both children to attend a registered daycare, and another \$60 per child monthly for lunches and snacks. Sloboda learned about the funding change via an email from the director of her children's daycare. She said her family could have prepared better for the increased costs if there had been more notice that the subsidy would be ending.

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Alberta needs to create up to 68,700 new childcare spaces, with 42,500 allocated to public or non-profit facilities, under the \$3.8 billion Canada-Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement.

The agreement is intended to bring child care fees to \$10 a day by 2026. Jones said Alberta is increasing its annual contribution from \$250 million to \$720 million. He said Alberta has created 31,000 new spaces so far.

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