

Some Alberta parents are paying \$0 for child care but that's about to change ^[1]

Move to flat monthly fee means increases for some, especially lower-income families

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts

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Jeff Bisanz with the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care, however, believes the change on April 1 is "really going to be devastating" for some lower-income families.

He noted many of these families have made long-term financial decisions regarding work and child care based on the previous cost structure, and live on extremely tight budgets. He worries some may not be able to afford the looming cost increases.

"Here we're talking about families with high incomes paying way less than they were paying before and families with low incomes not only paying more, but possibly being pushed out of the child-care system altogether because they can't pay," he said.

Another change coming April 1 is an expanded ability for child-care facilities to charge additional fees for "optional" services such as field trips, specialized classes and meals.

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He said he's already heard of concerns among early childhood educators about the "moral and ethical" dilemmas this can create, and the pressure some might feel to reach into their own pockets to cover the cost for children who would otherwise go without the optional services that other children receive.

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