

Ed delivers daycare promises: But critics say plans fall short [CA-AB]^[1]

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Author: Loome, Jeremy

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Premier Ed Stelmach promised yesterday to cut taxes for low-income parents and create up to 18,000 new daycare spots by 2016.

Speaking in Red Deer, Stelmach said the Conservatives understand some of the burdens low-income parents are facing in the current economy and that, if re-elected, a Conservative government would strive to address those issues.

EASIER CHOICES

"We're doing more to help families because we know families want the best for their loved ones," he said. "Our plan will leave more dollars in Albertans' pockets to make it easier for them to make choices on how best to care for their families."

The plan consists of increasing eligibility for the Family Employment Tax credit, to take in an additional 20,000 families; increasing the low-income tax credit by 10%; supporting the creation of the new daycare spaces; and working with the industry to improve recruitment and retention.

But advocates for improved child care in Alberta immediately jumped on the announcement, pointing out that the Stelmach government itself has already acknowledged the biggest challenge in child care is finding and retaining qualified staff.

That has more to do with daycare spaces closing or not being available than anything else, noted Public Interest Alberta's Bill Moore-Kilgannon. And yet it's the one area of the plan the premier didn't significantly address, he noted.

"Unfortunately, there is nothing new in today's announcement other than a tax cut for a small segment of low-income workers," said Moore-Kilgannon. "A tax cut will not build a quality child-care system, any more than a tax cut will build more schools or roads."

Giving parents an extra \$600 a year to pay for child care won't provide them with good child-care options, he said.

ALBERTA ALONE

"We are the only province that does not have a provincial policy to support children six to 12. We have to stop leaving school-age care out in the cold," he said.

Public Interest Alberta has a long-standing criticism of the Tory decision to roll \$25.9 million in federal child care grants each year into general revenue.

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- reprinted from the Edmonton Sun

Region: Alberta^[2]

Tags: poverty^[3]

staff^[4]

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