

PCs pledge 14,000 new day-care spaces [CA-AB] ^[1]

Edmonton Journal

Author: Fekete, Jason

Source: Edmonton Journal

Format: Article

Publication Date: 8 Feb 2008

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Angry mothers pan promises, including tax breaks worth estimated \$26 a month.

Premier Ed Stelmach's campaign hit more speed bumps Thursday in the Conservative heartland as mothers grilled him over a child-care announcement and oil and gas workers vented frustration about the new royalty regime.

Speaking to a few dozen mothers at Tiny Treasures Daycare in Red Deer, Stelmach pledged a Conservative government would introduce a series of modest tax breaks for families and create thousands of new child-care spaces.

"Even in a time of prosperity, I know that Alberta families are feeling a bit squeezed by increasing costs of supporting a family," Stelmach said. "This is a wise investment in the future, in Alberta and in the foundation of our province."

Stelmach committed to increase the eligibility level of the Family Employment Tax Credit by \$5,000 to an annual income of \$31,392.

The move would qualify about 20,000 Alberta families for the tax cut.

He also promised to trim taxes for 150,000 families by increasing the tax credit amount for low-income families and single parents by 10 per cent, which translates into a tax credit of \$639 for those with one child, \$1,219 for two children, \$1,569 for three and \$1,685 for four.

Stelmach and his officials didn't know how much the credits would save Albertans in real dollars, but tax experts said the plan would give a family of four with a combined income of \$40,000 about \$26 extra each month.

The final piece of the plan is to create 14,000 new child-care spaces over the next three years and another 4,000 spaces by 2016. To find the child-care workers to staff the centres, the government will implement recruitment and retention plans that target support agencies and foreign workers.

"I recognize this is a challenge in today's Alberta," he said.

But the Tory blueprint was immediately shredded by several mothers who heard the announcement.

Sharlene Dolan, a secretary with a two-year-old daughter, badgered Stelmach at the podium for answers.

"You can decrease my taxes but if my day-care costs go up another \$100, you've still done nothing for the parents," Dolan told reporters later, insisting a cap on day-care prices is needed.

...

Janice Varner, a single mother who has two kids, raised concerns with Stelmach's plan and asked how qualified the workers will be to staff all the promised child-care spaces.

"I don't want my child being taken care of by someone who doesn't speak English," she said.

Stelmach later met privately with some of the women to explain the proposal and how it could aid them.

Liberal Leader Kevin Taft bashed the Tories for neglecting the child-care issue for years, saying Stelmach is making a "death-bed conversion" just in time for an election.

The Liberal leader said higher staff wages are his top child-care policy.

...

The rough receptions in Red Deer and Drayton Valley only add to what's already been a rocky start to Stelmach's first election campaign as premier, suggested Peter McCormick, political scientist at the University of Alberta.

"This is the part of the campaign that should be on auto pilot," McCormick said. "This was well set up to be a triumphant campaign, but it just isn't working."

...

- reprinted from the Edmonton Journal

Region: Alberta ^[2]

Tags: funding ^[3]

spaces ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/02/pcs-pledge-14000-new-day-care-spaces-ca-ab>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/02/pcs-pledge-14000-new-day-care-spaces-ca-ab> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7859> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces>