

Child-benefit costs under control: Ottawa [CA] ^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Administration of the new Universal Child Care Benefit accounts for just 2 per cent of the total cost of the program, the federal government said yesterday.

After an article in yesterday's Globe and Mail outlined apparent reluctance on the part of Human Resources and Social Development Canada to release the figures, department officials said the costs of sending the monthly cheques to parents of preschoolers are actually lower than had been originally projected.

Earlier estimates in documents obtained by The Globe suggested that the administrative costs, including advertising, processing and cheque delivery, would be \$40.1-million this year.

In fact, they will be \$30.9-million, Alain Garceau, the department's manager of media services, said in an e-mail.

Annual costs in the third and subsequent years are now estimated to be \$16.7-million rather than the \$17.3-million originally forecast, he said.

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A report was compiled by the Human Resources and Social Development Department shortly after the Conservatives took office in January.

It said that it would be important "to secure co-operation and collaboration with the provinces and territories, given the new tax credit's implications for provincial/territorial child-care systems, and given that provincial/territorial legislation requires that new child-care centres be regulated."

That co-operation has been slow to develop.

Some provinces have objected to the Conservative plan.

They say it leaves them out of the loop. Mary Anne Chambers, Ontario's Minister of Children and Youth Services, met with Ms. Finley two weeks ago and wrote a follow-up letter in which she said: "It appears that you see the provincial role as being limited to the licensing of facilities."

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- reprinted from the Globe and Mail

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