

Province touts its own child-care program [CA-ON]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

If the federal government wants to create up to 25,000 new child-care spaces annually, as promised in last spring's budget, it will need provincial help to do it, Ontario's children's services minister says.

The Conservatives have pledged to replace the former Liberal government's \$5-billion federal-provincial child-care initiative next year with \$250 million in annual grants and tax credits to businesses and community groups that create child-care spots. A maximum of \$10,000 would be available for each new space created.

But in a recent meeting with Human Resources Minister Diane Finlay, Ontario Children's Minister Mary Anne Chambers noted that previous provincial efforts to create child care by offering tax incentives to businesses failed miserably. And \$10,000 per space falls far short of actual costs.

Instead, Chambers suggested Ontario's school-based Best Start child-care plan, managed by local municipalities, is already getting results — almost 15,000 new spaces have been created in the past year — and would be the best avenue for future federal investment.

...

In an interview yesterday, Chambers said she's worried provinces will be limited to a licensing role only under the Tory plan — a situation that would be unacceptable to Ontario and most other provinces.

"We all have our plans. We know how best to proceed," she said. "The feds have to respect provincial jurisdiction in this."

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- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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