

B.C. boosts child care funding by \$8m [CA-BC] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The B.C. government yesterday announced an \$8-million boost to child care funding and promised far more to come from a child care windfall from Ottawa.

Linda Reid, minister of state for child care, said the \$8.1 million is earmarked for more quality child care spaces, service improvements and staff training.

Reid also said Victoria and Ottawa are very close to signing a deal that would yield \$633 million in federal child care funding over five years.

"I can tell you it's weeks away, maybe days away," Reid said.

Ottawa has already signed deals with Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland and Alberta.

A spokesman for federal Social Development Minister Ken Dryden backed up Reid's comments.

"Certainly we're very optimistic," Jamie Tomlinson said from Ottawa.

Meanwhile, she focused on the impact of the \$8.1 million.

Eleven organizations in eight B.C. communities will get one-time grants totalling \$1 million under a Child Care Capital Funding Program supporting the creation of 236 new licensed group child care spaces, and keeping or enhancing another 161 spaces.

In addition, there will be a \$7 million one-time boost to help 4,000 licensed child care providers in B.C.

The NDP's child care critic Diane Thorne was not impressed.

"This one-time, stop-gap funding is a far cry from a clear plan for child care," said Thorne, MLA for Coquitlam-Maillardville.

Thorne said she was pleased to see any money go into child care but wary about the delay in B.C. coming to an agreement with Ottawa.

- reprinted from the Vancouver Province

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