

# Analysing the federal budget's impact on daycare [CA]<sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

LaFLAMME: Well, for a lot of Canadian families childcare really is the only solution because they are working parents. So, what was in the federal budget? What did they want and what did they get? Joining us to discuss it is Ian Bird, with Malia [sp?] and Kristin.

Thank you for joining us. And also Christina Beauchamp joins us with Grace. It's good to have all of you here. Hello, Grace. It's her first time on television. First of all, Christina, you work in a daycare centre.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes, that's right.

LaFLAMME: So, give me the notion of what moms and dads were looking for in this federal budget.

BEAUCHAMP: We were looking for more affordable childcare. We really would like to see universal childcare. The great lump sum is terrific, but I'm really worried and concerned about how it's spread out. We need affordable daycare. And we need subsidized spaces.

LaFLAMME: How much a month to put Grace in daycare?

BEAUCHAMP: At preschool age, which she is now, it's between eight or nine hundred dollars a month. And middle-income families just can't afford that. And the caps that subsidies put on, it allows for the lower-income families to benefit from that and the upper-income families can pay the full fee. But the middle-income families can't afford it. I work in licensed, quality care but my daughter is not in licensed care.

LaFLAMME: Isn't that something? What an irony. Kristen and Ian, your story is also interesting. Basically, you moved to the province of Quebec to afford daycare for Malia.

BIRD: Well, to a degree. We wanted to live in Chelsea. And one of the outcomes of that is the long waiting list we were on in Ontario and the \$45 a day that we were going to face was essentially gone. We were actually lucky still to get childcare in Quebec. But in getting it, now it costs us about \$12 a day.

LaFLAMME: So, \$12 a day because you live across the river?

VAN CLEAVE: Yes, ten minutes away.

LaFLAMME: Ten minutes away. But you work in Ottawa, you live in Chelsea. And it's unbelievable.

BIRD: Yeah, and we've got another one coming. So, you know --

VAN CLEAVE: The cost of two in daycare.

LaFLAMME: So, Christina, you are at a disadvantage because you are here. But this is a provincial issue.

BEAUCHAMP: Yes.

LaFLAMME: So, what were you expecting the federal government to do to sort of level the playing field across this country so that Kristen and Ian are not getting such a better deal than you are?

BEAUCHAMP: Universal daycare. I would love to see it. They are paying \$12 a day for a child that age. In our daycare it's between 14 and 15 hundred a month. That's \$68 a day. And there's a lot of families that can't pay that. I would really like to see a daycare setup like in Quebec: universal daycare, affordable for everybody, spaces available. I have had parents cry to me on the phone that they have to wait a year because they want to go back to work and school and they can't afford it.

LaFLAMME: But, you know, there's a billion dollars in this budget. I mean, that's nothing to sneeze at. What was your reaction to that amount of money?

VAN CLEAVE: I suppose it is a substantial piece of money. I guess the only thing that was really very disappointing is the allocation for the next two years. It's very low. So we were hoping for action a little bit faster than it's going to happen, I guess.

LaFLAMME: Give me your perspective then, Ian, for you. I mean, do you think that it's fair that daycare services across this country, there

is such a disparity?

BIRD: I don't know if it's an issue of fairness. I think, like Christina mentions, what we're looking for is universality. So, Quebec has led the way and provided a bit of a roadmap for how it could look in other provinces. The federal government has taken a small step in year one and year two: \$25-million, \$75-million. And we sure hope that years 3, 4 and 5 actually come up with the kind of dollars that will allow [overtalk] --

LaFLAMME: Does that worry you, that we're looking at a leadership change here?

BEAUCHAMP: Absolutely.

LaFLAMME: What do you think about that, Christina? We don't really know --

BEAUCHAMP: Exactly. You can make all the promises now, but that was one of my concerns, is that because of the way it's allocated over the five years I'm really worried about what's going to happen. You can make all kinds of promises now, but we need it now. We need the universal care now.

LaFLAMME: Also, the two of you lived in British Columbia.

VAN CLEAVE: Mm-hm.

LaFLAMME: So, you know, give us the comparative. Now you have hit BC, Ontario and Quebec.

VAN CLEAVE: Well, we have got nieces and nephews in daycare in Vancouver. And it's very expensive. Not quite as expensive, I think, as Ottawa. But very expensive there as well. And the same kind of situation where only the very rich and the very poor can afford quality daycare. And if you fall where most people in Canada do, right in the middle, you're looking for other solutions -- with family or in unlicensed daycare, which is kind of scary.

LaFLAMME: That makes you nervous.

VAN CLEAVE: Yeah.

BIRD: I work in the Canadian amateur sport community. And it's a very similar kind of situation. We talk about going from patchwork to a framework. And sport, it's a patchwork sport system. Daycare, it's patchwork. You get one thing in one place, something else in another. And to have a real framework that is supported by the federal government and allows provincial governments then to buy in as well, that's something that's going to work for families and it's going to work for parents, it's going to work for Malia and Grace and our kids.

LaFLAMME: Christina, how do you do it then, right now? What's your reality?

BEAUCHAMP: It's very difficult. I just had to change childcare- givers. I got three days' notice. Grace was with someone for a year and a half. Consistency is really important to me. I have been fortunate, she is not in regulated childcare, but I found a quality homecare-giver. But I wanted her in quality, licensed care with trained people that set up age-appropriate activities, that safety and nutrition are No. 1.

LaFLAMME: Okay. Well, I want to thank all of you so much for really setting the stage here for what you need and what you got. Thanks for this.

- reprinted from the CTV transcript

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