

# By the numbers: Poll shows parents want government to create more child-care spaces, not just hand out cash <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Read Online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

A new survey shows a majority of people understand the acute shortage in licensed child-care spaces in B.C., and they would prefer the government solve the problem rather than give parents a small tax credit to cover child-care costs.

The online survey by Insights West was completed last December, and found that 82 per cent of respondents believed the "\$10-a-Day" plan - a social program that would increase the number of affordable child-care spaces and improve wages and training for early childhood educators - is "beneficial" for the province.

Sharon Gregson, a child-care advocate, said that since the plan was introduced in 2011, the new poll results show the highest level of support ever.

"This has been the most penetration we've seen of support for this concrete plan," Gregson said. "Everyone knows a mother who can't go back to work because she couldn't find child-care spaces, or be able to afford what was available."

Survey results are based on an online study among 862 British Columbians aged over 18.

102,908

## Number of Spaces

Recent statistics show just 102,908 licensed child-care spaces are available in B.C., which only meets the needs of 18 per cent of about 570,000 children (0-12) in the province. The gap in spaces needed causes mothers to scramble for options, rely on sub-par care, or simply drop out of work.

"We have too many children being cared for in illegal child-care spaces," Gregson said. "And we are seeing grandparents now that have to do child care for their own children, when they thought they would be focusing on retirement. The results of the poll (supporting the \$10-a-Day plan) are consistent across age groups."

\$1,900

## The Fees

Fees for child care in Vancouver are the second-highest in Canada, behind only Toronto, according to statistics from B.C. child-care advocates. B.C.'s average child-care cost averages are:

- Infants: \$1,047 per month - up to \$1,900/month in Vancouver;
- Toddlers: \$907 per month - up to \$1,560/month in Vancouver;
- 3-5 year olds: \$761 per month - up to \$1,395 in Vancouver.

High fees are connected to B.C.'s below-average labour-force participation. In B.C., 64.4 per cent of mothers with children 0-2 are in the paid workforce; 74.6 per cent of mothers with children 3-5 are in the workforce; and 82.1 per cent of mothers with children 6-15 are in the workforce.

## The Support

Three-in-four British Columbians support the \$10-a-Day proposal, according to the Insights West poll, including 83 per cent of those who have had recent experiences trying to access child care. According to the pollsters, support for increased government involvement in child care cuts across ideological lines, and three-in-five residents would consider voting for a political party that implemented the \$10-a-Day plan.

\$55

## The Tax Credit

According to Insights West, poll results showed that the government's "Early Years Strategy" is not sufficient to satisfy the broad support for increased child care expressed by survey respondents.

A \$55-per-month early childhood tax credit for parents with a child under age 6, set to start this April, was seen as beneficial by 50 per cent of survey respondents. But 64 per cent believe it is better to fund services allowing parents to enrol their children in child-care facilities. And just 22 per cent think it is better for the government to provide cash for parents so they can decide on their own how to cover child-care costs for their children.

The federal government's move to increase the monthly taxable Universal Child Care Benefit payment from \$100 to \$160 is seen as beneficial by 62 per cent of survey respondents.

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability <sup>[4]</sup>

funding <sup>[5]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[6]</sup>

spaces <sup>[7]</sup>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/03/numbers-poll-shows-parents-want-government-create-more-child-care-sp> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://theprovince.com/news/local-news/by-the-numbers-poll-shows-parents-want-government-to-create-more-child-care-spaces> <sup>[3]</sup>

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