

Justin Trudeau hints at national child-care plan tied to income ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Liberals' proposed new child benefit will not be in lieu of a national child-care plan, but much like the promised monthly benefit, a universal child-care system under a Trudeau government would likely be geared to income.

"We're committed to making sure parents have affordable, quality early learning for their kids, there's no question about it," Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau told host Evan Solomon in an interview airing Saturday on CBC Radio's The House.

What might such a daycare program look like if the Liberals are elected this fall?

Trudeau is staying mum for now, promising to share more in the coming months, but he was clear it would be different from the NDP's pledge of a \$15 a day national child-care plan.

"[NDP Leader Tom] Mulcair's solution will benefit families who are making an awful lot of money and quite frankly don't need subsidized child-care spaces," Trudeau said.

"I think there is a need for national leadership to make sure that early learning and child care happens, it's just that the actual model put forward by Mr. Mulcair benefits wealthy families as much as it benefits those who actually need it," he added.

A universal \$15 a day child-care system is a major plank of the NDP campaign platform, which promises to create or maintain a million daycare spaces across Canada over an eight-year period.

The NDP will pay for the program by cancelling the Conservatives' parental income-splitting plan, a tax cut estimated to cost the government \$2 billion a year, Mulcair said in an interview on The House April 25.

"We've costed this, we have more than enough to cover the program, we know what we're doing," the NDP leader said. "\$15 a day is our starting point and we do believe it is sustainable."

Asking wealthier Canadians to contribute more - whether it's potentially for child-care spaces or through the Liberals' proposed tax bracket for those who earn over \$200,000 - was the running theme for Trudeau in the interview with Solomon.

"Canada has always been there to help people who need it," he said.

"[Our plan] is completely in keeping with the values and fairness that is at the heart of this country. We're asking those who have done well to do a little more for the people who need it."

Trudeau also expanded upon his planned monthly child benefit, which would roll together and enrich two existing benefits that are geared to income - the Canada child tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement - into a single, more generous payment that would give families up to \$6,400 annually for every child under six and up to \$5,400 for children aged six to 17.

He is also promising to do away with the Conservative's universal child-care benefit, arguing it makes no sense for rich and poor families to receive the same amount of money.

"Our child benefit goes directly to the families who need it the most," he said, dismissing criticism his plan wouldn't do enough to help the working poor.

"We're giving \$6,400 a year to any family with a family income under \$30,000," he said, adding the benefit amount would be tied to family income and would gradually disappear at higher income levels.

Despite all three political parties' heavy pre-campaign courting of the middle class, Trudeau hinted his future platform announcements will be targeted towards helping other groups.

"We will have plenty more to say about students, seniors, low-income singles and a range of people in the coming weeks and months," he said.

- reprinted from CBC News

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