

# Cabinet offers 100 million for daycare <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

The Swiss government wants to help parents by providing CHF100 million (\$107 million) towards childcare over the next eight years as part of its new family policy outlined on Thursday.

Thousands of daycare centres have been created over the past ten years, but numbers are still insufficient. Furthermore, daycare is extremely expensive and often poorly adapted to working parents in Switzerland - a situation that dissuades mothers in particular from working.

The government therefore wishes to support the cantons, communes and employers to develop additional crèches and other daycare services, mainly for schoolchildren. It suggests topping up contributions made by the cantons.

The government said it must use its limited competencies in a targeted fashion to help parents reconcile family and professional life.

The cabinet has instructed the interior ministry to come up with a draft law to be presented to parliament by September. It has excluded any tax breaks for families at this stage, however.

Structures for childcare facilities are largely determined by the cantons and communes. The financing, cost and number of places available can vary considerably depending on the region.

## Incentive programme

To stem a shortage of facilities, the government initiated a CHF440 million incentive programme in 2003 to fund the creation of crèches. More than 23,000 childcare places were created by 2013. However, three-quarters of communes do not finance any childcare facilities and three-quarters of children under the age of three still do not have access to a crèche.

In a European comparison, Switzerland has one of the lowest proportions of children under the age of three who attend crèche for a majority of their time.

French-speaking Switzerland and German-speaking cities - such as Zurich, Zug and Basel - provide the most childcare places. In rural and eastern areas, a conservative view of the family dominates: generally speaking, the years preceding a child's entry into preschool are considered a family matter in which the state has no business meddling.

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**Region:** Europe <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** federal programs <sup>[3]</sup>

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