

# Liberals deliver on Canada Child Benefit <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

Toronto single mother Ava Williams was in shock when she learned Tuesday's budget could mean an additional \$4,000 a year for her four children.

"Honestly, I'd have to see it first to believe it," said Williams, 33, whose children range in age from 6 to 17.

Under the Trudeau government's new streamlined Canada Child Benefit, families with children under age 6 will receive an annual tax-free benefit of up to \$6,400 per child and those with children between the ages of 6 and 17 will receive up to \$5,400.

Families with annual net incomes below \$30,000 will receive the maximum payment.

"My son is starting college in September. I've saved up for tuition. But maybe I could use the money for books. Or something else he might need," Williams said.

"And then there is Grade 8 graduation for my daughter next year — and you know how girls are. Or maybe we could look at moving into a better place," she added.

Williams has relied on social assistance, child benefits and various part-time jobs since 2007 when she left an abusive relationship and went back to school to earn a diploma in social work.

Next week, she starts a full-time job in a residential care facility for adolescent boys in trouble with the law, where she will be earning about \$40,000 — or about \$32,000 after taxes.

"With the new job and now this extra money from the government, I will be able to do so much more for my kids," she said.

Finance Minister Bill Morneau said the measure delivers on the Liberal government's promise to help parents with the high cost of raising children by scrapping some Conservative family-friendly measures in favour of a simpler, tax-free benefit.

"The Canada Child Benefit is the most significant social policy innovation in a generation. It will lift hundreds of thousands of kids up from poverty," he said Tuesday in his speech to the Commons.

Anti-poverty groups praised the measure, but warned they would oppose any attempt by provinces to claw back the payment from families on social assistance.

"This is a historic step forward in the battle against child poverty in Canada that is long overdue and long called-for by Campaign 2000 and other groups," said Anita Khanna, national co-ordinator of Campaign 2000.

"But we're very keen to understand the details of the delivery to ensure the money goes to the children and families who are most in need — those on social assistance," she added.

The new program, coming into effect July 1, rolls four former benefits — including the Universal Child Care Benefit and the income-splitting scheme for two-parent households the Conservatives brought in last year — into a single monthly payment.

It comes with a net cost of \$22.4 billion over five years.

Child care is also mentioned in the budget, in the form of \$500 million in fiscal 2017-18 to support the creation of a National Early Learning and Child Care Framework, which will be developed in consultation with the provinces, territories and indigenous communities beginning this year.

But advocates say that by deferring funding for child care until the 2017 budget, the Trudeau government "missed a chance to act on a fundamental ingredient for reducing child poverty."

"Although the government has committed to work with provinces, territories, indigenous communities on a national framework in the

long-term, struggling families needed federal funds in this budget to shore up services in the short-term,” said Martha Friendly of the Toronto-based Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

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