

Federal budget 2021 : child care in brief



Prepared for: What's next for child care - After the federal budget
Child Care Now, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, and
Canadian Child Care Federation, 23 April 2021

Prepared by: Martha Friendly, CRRU



About gov't budgets...

- A budget is not a policy document - usually not many details.
- This budget, however, has a lot of details...
...but in some areas, details are not yet available.
- Today we'll stick to what's in the budget, with some informed interpretations.

Budget signals - federal intent

“...transformative project on a scale with the work of previous generations of Canadians, who built a public school system and public health care.”

“..Just as public school provides children with quality education in their neighbourhoods, the government's goal is to ensure all families have access to high-quality, affordable early learning and child care no matter where they live”.

“... our goals are now national”.

Feds have put very substantial funding on the table and indicated they want to be an equal partner, though provincial jurisdiction (setting conditions).

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Financing ELCC

- **NEW MONEY: \$30B over 5 years**
- **Front-loaded: biggest increase in 2021-22**
- In 2025-2026 federal funding will reach \$9.2B/year and will be ongoing
- Funds will be earmarked for Indigenous ELCC
- Federal ELCC contributions will be roughly equal to that of provincial/territorial governments in five years
- Intent is to shift to supply-side funding - build a system
- "Provinces that agree to step up.. Will move forward on agreements.. but [if not], won't be getting the resources to move forward on child care" (PM Trudeau)

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Making ELCC affordable

Goal 1 By the end of 2022, 50% reduction in average fees for all* regulated ELCC everywhere outside Quebec.

Goal 2 By 2025-26: an average of \$10 a day for all regulated child care spaces.

The budget is very explicit about expecting that affordability goals will be conditions.

*all regulated child care = non-profit/for-profit, family child care/centres (below school-age)

Child care workforce

“A growing, qualified workforce—with provincial and territorial partners, the government will work to ensure that early childhood educators are at the heart of the system, by valuing their work and providing them with the training and development opportunities needed to support their growth and the growth of a quality system of child care. Over 95 per cent of child care workers are women, many of whom are making low wages, with a median wage of \$19.20 per hour”.

Not a lot of detail but assume intent is to address issues thoroughly.

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Expansion

- Ongoing annual growth in quality, affordable child care spaces across the country (*number not specified*).
- Working with provinces/territories to support primarily not-for-profit expansion of quality spaces.
- Commitment to “meaningful progress” for before and after school care.
- Physical accessibility for children with disabilities, \$29.2 million over two years in capital to support inclusion.

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Further measures

- Establishment of Federal Secretariat on ELCC
- National Advisory Council to provide expert advice/forum for consultation on issues and challenges facing the ELCC sector
- Federal ELCC legislation after consultations with stakeholders, provincial/ territorial/Indigenous partners—to enshrine principles of a Canada-wide child care system in law. Set for Fall 2021.

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