



The Affordable Child Care for All Plan

Child care for all - the starting point and long-term goal

Making affordable, high-quality early learning and child care (ELCC) available to all families will grow the economy, promote gender equality, increase women's labour force participation and enhance children's well-being.

The federal government must play a leadership role to ensure that all children in Canada, regardless of where they live, their ability, family circumstances or culture have access to affordable high-quality child care.

Canada needs a plan—a road map—to affordable child care for all.

Child care for all by 2030

The Affordable Child Care for All Plan takes a long-term, phased approach to building the solid universal child care system Canada needs. The Plan provides for an increase in Canada's federal ELCC budget to \$1 billion in 2020, and a further increase of \$1 billion each year for ten years so as to meet the internationally recommended spending benchmark and achieve the goal of affordable, high-quality, inclusive child care for all across Canada.

Focus on improving, affordability, accessibility (expansion), and quality, simultaneously

The Affordable Child Care for All Plan focuses on addressing three elements simultaneously: *accessibility (expanding service availability)*, making child care *affordable* and improving *quality*, largely by tackling child care workforce issues.

- **Making ELCC affordable:** the plan moves away from relying mostly on parent fees to cover the costs of operating child care services. This shift has two parts:
 - a) parent fees will be set by provincial/territorial governments at rates ranging from \$0 to amounts calculated to be affordable;
 - b) public funds, in the form of direct operational funding, will be used to make up the difference between parent fee revenue and the full cost of high-quality, inclusive child care.
- **Strengthening accessibility (expanding availability):** the plan moves away from relying on private initiatives for creating child care services to a planned, public approach. Governments and communities will work together to determine *where* services are needed in urban/suburban/rural/remote communities; *what* kinds of services are needed (centres, full/part-day, home child care) and *for whom* (child age groups, language, parent schedules, etc.). Provincial/territorial "expansion strategies" will be developed based on demand forecasting and capital funding. Expansion will extend to various settings (residential communities, workplaces, schools, other public buildings, and other sites).
- **Improving ELCC quality:** fixing child care sector workforce issues is necessary both to improve the quality of child care and to allow service expansion. Under the plan, federal, provincial and territorial governments will work together, and with Indigenous communities and the child care sector, to develop a comprehensive strategy to develop and implement a workforce strategy. This will include specific measures and timetables to address remuneration, educational requirements, training, recruitment and retention of early childhood educators and others who work in the sector. All such measures will help in bringing about pay equity for the mostly female child care workforce.



Federal leadership and levers to implement the plan

The federal government will realize the Affordable Child Care for All Plan by taking the following steps, all of which fall within federal jurisdiction.

- Negotiate provincial/territorial child care agreements with solid implementation plans and timetables, and make federal transfer payments conditional on agreements being met;
- Enact federal child care legislation that enshrines Canada's commitment to public child care, and sets out the principles and conditions for ELCC federal transfer payments similar to the *Canada Health Act*;
- Establish a federal child care secretariat or branch within the federal government to facilitate collaboration with provinces/territories, the Indigenous Peoples, experts and stakeholders, and to coordinate ELCC initiatives such as a workforce strategy, a data/research strategy, and innovation;
- Establish a national data and research strategy to inform evidence-based policy development;
- Reinstatement of the funding for community stakeholders/researchers/experts/advocates to strengthen the capacity of the child care sector to support affordable, high-quality, inclusive child care services that are responsive to the needs of parents, children, and communities.

Summary - The Affordable Child Care for All Plan calls for the Government of Canada to:

- Play a greater leadership role in building a stable child care system for all over 10 years in the next and subsequent phases of bilateral agreements;
- Boost funding significantly by increasing Canada's ELCC budget by \$1 billion each year over 10 years to meet international benchmarks and reach the goal of affordable, high-quality, inclusive child care for all across Canada;
- Negotiate ELCC agreements with the provinces and territories that demand action on three fronts simultaneously: a) Planned expansion through public/non-profit services; b) Making child care affordable through operational funding and set fees; c) Improving quality and stability through public spending on the child care workforce including improving child care sector wages;
- Continue to work with Indigenous leaders and communities to operationalize, implement and expand on the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework to realize the goals and aspirations of the Indigenous Peoples;
- Put in place federal infrastructure (legislation, a federal secretariat, funding to the child care sector) to support the implementation of the plan.

This plan was developed through extensive consultations with a wide array of organizations and individuals concerned with the well-being of children, gender equality, the economic security of families, as well as social inclusion and equity. All of us share the common goal of building a child care system in Canada that is responsive to the needs of children and families, affordable, and that will allow for Canada's economy to grow for the benefit of all. Individuals are encouraged to support the plan by signing our [petition](#) to Canada's federal party leaders (childcareforall.ca). We invite organizations to endorse the plan by writing to ed@ccnow.ca.

