



CANADIAN FEDERATION
OF NURSES UNIONS
LA FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE
DES SYNDICATS D'INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS

POSITION STATEMENT

Child Care

September 2022

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), the cost of infant care in Toronto topped all Canadian cities, averaging \$1,948 per month in 2021. Similarly, the median toddler fee in Toronto is \$1,615 per month. Richmond, B.C., placed a close second at \$1,450 a month, and most suburbs in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) averaging fees of \$1,300 a month.¹

At the other end of the spectrum, Quebec cities have the lowest toddler fees in Canada and are already below the 50% reduction target for 2022 and the \$10-a-day 2025 federal target. Whitehorse's toddler fees, at \$200 a month, are also already below both federal targets.

In 1997, the Parti Québécois government introduced a new \$5-a-day child care program that proved hugely popular and demonstrated that affordable child care was possible if governments were willing to invest. Quebec's program was also significant in terms of the impact it had on the rate of women's participation in the labour market, permitting an estimated 69,700 women to enter or return to work in 2008.² Today in Quebec the cost of a child care space for one child is about \$10.³

In 2018, British Columbia also began offering a limited \$10-a-day daycare program.⁴ This program will be expanded from more than 6,500 daycare seats by December 2022.⁵ The economic and social benefits of universal child care are well documented. An evaluation found that enhanced government revenues in Quebec due to the increase in mother's labour force participation offsets 40% of Quebec's child care spending.⁶ Evaluations of the Quebec child care model also show that universal child care helps reduce poverty rates for single-parent families by giving single parents the ability to remain in the workforce and potentially upgrade their education and skills. The provision of daycare also improves child development, and provides social and support networks for families. But for the full benefits of child care to be realized, the report concludes, low-cost daycare must be universally accessible as in Quebec.⁷

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became impossible to ignore the significant impact that affordable and accessible child care would have on parents, families and the Canadian economy, leading the federal government to commit to provide dedicated funding for child care in the 2021 Budget, with the objective of achieving a 50 percent reduction nationwide in average fees for all regulated early learning and child care by the end of 2022, and specifying that parent fees outside Quebec would be brought down to an average of \$10 a day per child for all regulated child care spaces by 2025-2026.⁸

Next, the federal government announced the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, which would include negotiations on three-year bilateral agreements between the Government of Canada and individual provinces and territories. These agreements would determine how much federal funding for early learning and child care would be allocated and spent by each jurisdiction.⁹

As of March 2022, the federal government has inked bilateral agreements with all the provinces and territories.

CFNU POSITION

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU) recommends that the federal government fulfill its commitment to achieve a 50 percent reduction nationwide in average fees for all regulated early learning and child care by the end of 2022, and bring parent fees outside Quebec down to an average of \$10 a day per child for all regulated child care spaces by 2025-2026.¹⁰

¹ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

<https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2022/05/Game%20changer.pdf>

² Interventions économiques. <https://journals.openedition.org/interventionseconomiques/>

³ Government of Quebec. <http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/budget/outils/garde-net-en.asp>

⁴ BC Government. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/running-daycare-preschool/10-a-day-childcarebc-centres>

⁵ Government of British Columbia. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/>

⁶ Child Care Now. <https://childcarenow.ca/>

⁷ City of Toronto. <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/ed/bgrd/backgroundfile-107205.pdf>

⁸ Government of Canada Budget 2021. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>

⁹ Child Care Now. <https://muttart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Child-Care-Now-The-Multilateral-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-Framework-and-the-Early-Learning-and-Child-Care-Bilateral-Agreements-Feb.-2019.pdf>

¹⁰ Government of Canada Budget 2021. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>