

\$10-a-day child care coming to Ontario

Justin Trudeau, Doug Ford sign agreement on five-year program

By Zachary Roman

Affordable child care is on its way to Ontario, according to the Federal and Provincial governments.

On March 28, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ontario Premier Doug Ford entered into an agreement to bring \$10-a-day childcare to the province, as well as create 86,000 more child care and early learning spaces.

Child care prices will not drop to \$10 right away. They'll drop by 25 per cent on April 1, and by the end of the year they should drop by about 50 per cent on average, according to a media release from the Prime Minister's office.

The agreement will reduce licensed child care fees for children under six years old on average by 25 per cent as of April 1, 2022, saving Ontario families an average of about \$2,200 per child, reads the release.

By the end of the year, fees will be further lowered, and families will see a total reduction of 50 per cent on average, saving them an average of about \$6,000 per child per year. This agreement will deliver on average \$10-a-day child care for Ontario families by the end of March 2026.

Ontario was the last province to sign an agreement with the Federal Liberals on affordable child care.

With the signing, all of Canada's provinces and territories are a part of the program. The government claims more than half of Canada has already seen reductions in child care fees and by year's end, average fees for regulated early learning and child care spaces will be halved country-wide.

The federal government is aiming to create 250,000 new child care spaces across Canada by March of 2026, in hopes people can access affordable child care no matter where they live.

In a statement, Premier Ford said the deal will keep money in the pockets of hard-working parents.

I'm so proud of the work we've done with our federal partners to land an agreement that will lower costs for families across the province. Given how complex Ontario's child care system is, we wanted to get this right, said Ford.

According to the media release, Ontario will receive \$10.2 billion in federal funding through 2025-26 and an additional \$2.9 billion in 2026-27, as part of the annual and ongoing \$9.2 billion federal commitment from Budget 2021 for a total of \$13.2 billion, to underscore the long-term commitment to building a better early learning and child care system, subject to the renewal of the agreement.

Under the new agreement, Ontario will be providing \$267 million towards child care in addition to the \$2 billion it already invests annually.

New child care spaces being created will be predominantly among licensed not-for-profit, public, and family-based child care providers, they said.

Chrystia Freeland, Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, said affordable child care is a cause championed by generations of forward-thinking Canadians.

?I am so pleased that today's agreement delivers our promise to Canadians to make life more affordable for young families, create jobs, increase women's participation in the workforce and give every child the best possible start in life ? no matter where they live,? said Freeland in the statement.