

Families have to sign up quick for child care benefit

The federal government has estimated that about 200,000 families with children who may be eligible for the enhanced Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) are at risk of not receiving it unless they apply.

In order to receive their money in July, families must sign up by May 1.

Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson is trying to encourage families to apply for the benefit.

The majority of families with children, approximately 3.8 million, are known and will automatically receive the enhanced UCCB or be contacted by the government to confirm their information, according to a statement Tilson issued this week. However, many eligible families are not currently captured by the government's UCCB system and may miss out on receiving money that is owed to them unless they apply. In 2015 alone, this represents potentially millions of dollars in unclaimed benefits.

Under the proposed enhancements to the UCCB, families would receive almost \$2,000 per year for each child under six and \$720 per year for each child aged six through 17. The new benefit amounts would be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2015 and be reflected in monthly payments to families in July. The proposed enhancements to the UCCB are expected to more than double the number of families that benefit from 1.6 million to more than four million.

“We want to ensure that every family with children receives the enhanced Universal Child Care Benefit,” Tilson said. “If you have kids under 18, you qualify. It doesn't matter how much you make or the type of child care you choose. Apply now so you can receive the money that is owed to you.”

If your family is not currently receiving the UCCB, has never received the UCCB, or has never applied for the Canada Child Tax Benefit and you still have children under 18 in your care, go to www.canada.ca/taxsavings in order to find out how you can apply.

All families with children will benefit from the new Family Tax Cuts and Benefits Plan, which includes the Family Tax Cut, and enhancements to the UCCB, Child Care Expense Deduction and the Children's Fitness Tax Credit.

Combined with tax relief introduced by the government since 2006, a typical family of four can receive up to \$6,600 in tax relief and enhanced benefits in 2015. Low- and middle-income families will receive two-thirds of the overall benefits provided by the government's new family measures.

The Family Tax Cut will eliminate or significantly reduce the difference in the federal tax payable by a one-earner couple relative to a two-earner couple with a similar family income.