Making before and after school care more accessible and affordable for families

Kids across Canada are heading back to school this month. But for many families with elementary school children, finding a spot in before and after school care programs will be difficult and expensive. In 2019, less than one in three elementary school kids will be able to get a space – and in Ontario, for the families lucky enough to get a spot, it will cost them more than $4,000 this year[1]. Meanwhile, parents who work late shifts or irregular hours have even fewer child care options. Since child care still falls disproportionately to women, moms are too often left to shoulder the responsibility.

Creating more spaces for kids

Parents across the country work hard to give their kids the best possible start in life. But it's difficult to juggle the responsibilities of work and child care, and parents need more support before and after school so they don't have to choose between making ends meet and caring for their kids.

A re-elected Liberal government will help parents with elementary school kids by doing the following:

→ We will create up to 250,000 more before and after school spaces for kids under the age of ten;

→ We will lower parents' fees by ten per cent across the country:

  • More than one million families will benefit from having their child care fees reduced.

  • Average fees vary across the country, from about $10 a day in Quebec[2] to nearly $30 a day in Alberta[3]. Assuming the national average of $21 a day, a family of four with two kids aged 7 and 9 will save about $800 a year[4];

→ We will dedicate a target of ten per cent of the new spaces to provide more child care options for parents who work overtime, late shifts, or multiple jobs so they can count on help when they need it most; and

→ We will do this by nearly doubling the federal support we provide to the provinces and territories through the Early Learning and Child Care Framework, investing at least $535 million more each year.

Ensuring quality and accountability in child care across the country

Child care systems differ from region to region and many families don't have access to enough affordable, high quality options. Early childhood educators are often overworked, underpaid, and without enough support. All orders of government need to work together to deliver a long-term vision for early learning and child-care – so that parents have the support they need to raise their kids without having to break the bank.

A re-elected Liberal government will work to improve the capacity, quality, and accountability of child care across Canada. We will:

→ Give more support to our early childhood educators, to ensure they are better paid and trained to take care of our kids. We will do this by investing at least $25 million per year to help cover the costs for early childhood educators seeking further training, and lower tuition costs for people getting their early childhood educator degree;

→ Establish a national secretariat to work with the provinces and territories to lay the groundwork for a pan-Canadian child care system. The secretariat will help establish national standards for future agreements under the ELCC Framework, promote best practices, and advance gender equality. The secretariat will work closely with the recently established Expert Panel on Early Learning and Child Care.

Costing

→ This initiative would cost $535 million per year, starting in fiscal year 2020-21. Further details regarding costing will be announced over the course of the campaign.

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[1]*Based on a median after-school fee of $21 per day (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/annual-report-2018.html) and 196 school days per year (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/list/calendar/holidaye.html).*

[2]*Page 7-8: http://ecereport.ca/media/uploads/2017-profiles-updated/qceng_final-feb14.pdf and inflated to 2019*

[3]*Page 101: https://www.childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/ECEC2016-AB.pdf and inflated to 2019*

[4]*Savings will depend on the program and province in which children are enrolled.*

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