

The Government of Canada Drastically Underfunded the CWELCC Agreement

While \$30 Billion Is a Lot of Money, it Falls Far Short of What is Needed to Achieve Quality, Accessible \$10/day Childcare Across Canada

CALGARY, AB, CANADA, February 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs \(AACE\)](#) asserted today that the Government of Canada drastically underfunded the \$10/day

childcare program, putting the industry at risk and causing concern about the long-term viability of the sector under the government's program. AACE maintains that the federal government has not only misled Canadian families with its funding commitments but has also failed to address the real cost implications of achieving its ambitious goal of reaching \$10/day childcare while also maintaining program quality and accessibility.

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Krystal Churcher, Chair



**ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
CHILDCARE ENTREPRENEURS**
YOUR CHILD, YOUR CHOICE

Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs is a not-for-profit comprised of childcare operators from across the province. Its goal is to advocate for choice in childcare that supports both families and operators.

In Alberta alone, the inadequacy of the allocated funds is glaring. The initial promise of \$3.4 billion over five years that was allocated to Alberta through the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare (CWELCC) agreement, when dissected, reveals a profound shortfall. With 152,000 licensed childcare spaces in Alberta at the program's inception, the math is straightforward: \$760 million annually from the total pledge, equating to merely \$5,000 per space per year assuming all spaces receive grant funding. This is clearly not enough funding to support the

existing need and it does not consider the ambitious goal of adding 68,000 more spaces, the relentless rise of inflation, and the actual operational costs of childcare centers.

The Association looked at similar programs in other countries and found that in Norway, for example, the Government pays approximately \$2000 per month per childcare space not including the parent pay portion. In Alberta, by contrast, the Government portion ranges between \$626 and \$883 or, on average \$731 per month. While the \$30 billion invested into the

affordable childcare program is indeed a large amount of money as the Government of Canada has stated, politicians should have consulted with industry and gained an understanding about what the correct amount should be to achieve high quality, accessible \$10/day childcare before making bold commitments to parents and irresponsibly rolling out the program.

"Childcare operators in Alberta and across Canada are tired of politicians pointing fingers at each other about who is to blame for the government-created crisis in the childcare sector," said AACE Board Chair, Krystal Churcher. "The Government of Canada came out with a flagship policy of \$10/day childcare and the amount of funding rolled out is drastically short of what is actually needed to achieve the goal. This discrepancy threatens to limit access for the majority of families and is degrading the quality of childcare — a concern AACE has raised since the program's announcement."

AACE firmly supports the principle of affordable childcare but opposes achieving it at the cost of quality and the viability of the childcare sector. The current trajectory threatens to dismantle an essential industry and erode the standard of care that families depend on.

In light of these concerns, AACE calls for an immediate pause to Bill C-35 and urges a national roundtable discussion on the matter. This crucial public dialogue between the Government of Canada and provincial governments is needed to address the challenges of the CWELCC agreement urgently and to initiate a public discussion - with parents and childcare operators included - about the type of childcare industry we want in Canada and what we are willing to invest to achieve it. Only through a transparent and collaborative effort and reevaluation can we ensure the sustainability of the childcare system and fulfill the promise of affordable, high-quality childcare for all Canadian families.

"We need a transparent national discussion about childcare in Canada before legislation is forced through," added Churcher. "While this national conversation should have happened before the Government of Canada rolled out its policies, it's better late than never. We are calling on the Government of Canada to take responsibility for the flawed rollout of the CWELCC agreement and funding, and to slow down and reevaluate its approach before irreparable damage is done to the industry."

More information can be found at <https://www.atwhatcost.info/>

About AACE:

The Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs (AACE) is a non-profit organization dedicated to representing for-profit and non-profit childcare centres, as well as day home operators across Alberta. AACE advocates for policies and practices that enhance the quality and accessibility of childcare services within a thriving mixed-market childcare system, ensuring the well-being and development of children, as well as childcare choice for Alberta parents and families.

Krystal Churcher, Chair

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