

First savings on new Child Care deal will be retroactive to this month: Province

Local families could see an immediate savings of 25 per cent on child care, according to the Province, following a deal struck between the Province and the Federal Government on providing \$10 a day child care.

Ontario was the last province in Canada to sign onto the deal, one which was formally announced last week in Brampton.

The \$13.2 billion agreement will lower fees and deliver an average of \$10 per day child care by September 2025.

The deal includes a reduction of child care fees through four phases of reduction to meet the target for kids five years and older. Parent rebates, retroactive to this month, will begin in May. It also includes, according to the Province, protection of all for-profit child care spaces, helping to support predominantly female entrepreneurs across the Province who provide high-quality child care services, and the creation of 86,000 new spaces for children five and under.

With the signing of today's agreement, we're making \$10 a day child care a reality for families across country, said Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Today's announcement will save Ontario families thousands of dollars each year with fee reductions starting as of Friday this week while creating jobs, growing the middle class, and giving our kids the best start in life.

Added Premier Doug Ford: From day one, I said our government wouldn't sign a deal that didn't work for Ontario parents and 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. Today, we're delivering a deal that will keep money in the pockets of hard-working parents.

The first step will see families with kids five and under at licensed child care centres with fees reduced up to 25 per cent, to a minimum of \$12 per day, retroactive to April 1. The next step will be reached in December 2022 with another fee reduction.

In total, fees for families will be reduced in 2022, on average, by 50 per cent, relieving parents of \$1.1 billion in child care costs, said the Province. Families will see further fee reductions in September 2024, culminating in a final reduction to an average of \$10 a day child care by September 2025. To maintain the province's high quality of child care, the agreement also supports the recruitment of new early childhood educators, stable compensation for all Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) working in licensed child care, including RECEs providing child care for children six- to 12-years-old.

Ontario will work with municipalities to enroll over 5,000 licensed child care centres and home child care agencies in the new program between now and September 1. Rebates to parents, retroactive to April 1, will begin in May, and will follow the enrolment of licensed centres and agencies into the new system. Ontario families will continue to benefit from the province's child care tax credit program, which remains in effect. This program provides an estimated 300,000 families with up to 75 per cent of their eligible expenses for licensed and unlicensed child care in centres, home-based care, camps and other settings.

Locally, the deal was hailed by Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leah Taylor Roy and Newmarket-Aurora MPP and Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Christine Elliott.

This is a great day, said Taylor Roy shortly after the announcement. The deal with Ontario got signed on child care and that was one of our major campaign promises. Now it is done across the country.

Added Ms. Elliott in a statement, The government fought to deliver the best deal possible for Ontarians. And, as a result, has secured \$3 billion more over the course of this agreement, an additional year of funding, and flexibility to support all parents.

Together, through the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit (CARE), affordable child care options, and continued investment in all-day Kindergarten, Ontario parents are now provided with the largest array of options, benefits, and supports for early years and child

care in the country.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter