

## Federal Budget 2003 – What does it really mean for licensed child care?

The total funding announced in the budget to “assist provinces and territories and First Nations in increasing access to quality child care and early learning opportunities, especially for low-income and single-parent families” is \$935 million. Of this \$935 million, \$35 million is promised for First Nations child care and early learning opportunities, primarily for programs on reserve.

### A look at some of the details:

The promises will provide the provinces/territories with a total of \$900 million over the next **five** years. The funding will be spent in accordance with the terms outlined in the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care. This new federal spending is solely for children under the age of six years.

The funding promise:

- In **2003- 2004**, a total of **\$ 25 million**;
- In **2004 -2005**, a total of **\$ 75 million**;
- In **2005- 2006**, a total of **\$150 million**;
- In **2006- 2007**, a total of **\$300 million**;
- In **2007- 2008**, a total of **\$350 million**.

[ Complete Budget details: <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget03/brief/briefe.htm> – child care is included in the section “Investing in Canadian Families and their Communities” ]

### How much federal money will each province/territory receive over the five years?

Province/Territory	Total \$ over five years
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$ 14.7 million
Prince Edward Island	\$ 3.9
Nova Scotia	\$ 26.5
New Brunswick	\$ 21.1
Quebec	\$ 208.8
Ontario	\$ 350.6
Manitoba	\$ 32.2
Saskatchewan	\$ 28.2
Alberta	\$ 89.5
BC	\$ 121.6
Yukon	\$ 0.8 (\$800,000)
Northwest Territories	\$ 1.12
Nunavut	\$ 0.8 (\$800,000)

*Note: This information is based on unofficial estimates. The allocations for each region are calculated on the number of children in a province/territory and are subject to annual population adjustments. The totals may not add due to "rounding" of the numbers.*

Based on the funding each province and territory will receive in each of the five years, and the number of children from birth to five years of age living in each region in 2001<sup>1</sup>, the annual per child spending for early learning and child care could look like this:

Province/Territory	Year 1 each child	Year 2 each child	Year 5 each child
Newfoundland and Labrador	\$13.16	\$32.47	\$187.50
Prince Edward Island	\$10.31	\$30.93	\$154.64
Nova Scotia	\$11.40	\$35.83	\$166.12
New Brunswick	\$12.30	\$36.89	\$165.98
Quebec	\$12.83	\$38.29	\$175.55
Ontario	\$11.37	\$34.34	\$161.97
Manitoba	\$11.42	\$34.26	\$158.63
Saskatchewan	\$10.61	\$31.83	\$144.56
Alberta	\$10.72	\$31.72	\$149.59
BC	\$13.27	\$40.23	\$191.47
Yukon	<i>not available</i>		
Northwest Territories	<i>not available</i>		
Nunavut	<i>not available</i>		

*Note: If you are interested in the estimates for the provinces/territories for each of the five years and/or more details of these calculations by province/territory, contact us by e mail at [info@parentvoices.ca](mailto:info@parentvoices.ca)*

### How does this budget news compare with what we need and what we know?

Here are a few facts for comparison:

- The National Social Policy Committee of the Liberal Party recommended the initial goal be to fund a child care space for every three to five year old who needs it. They estimated that spending up to \$1 billion in year one was needed; \$2.2 billion in year two; \$3.2 billion in year 3; and \$4.5 billion in year four, for a total of \$10.9 billion.  
(*A National Child Care Strategy: Getting the Architecture Right Now*<sup>2</sup>)
- Provinces/territories fund Kindergarten (part day programs) and in 2001 the spending ranged from \$2,000-3,000 for each child. For all kindergarten children from coast to coast to coast, it is estimated that approximately \$1.5 billion is spent annually.<sup>1</sup>
- The data for 2001<sup>1</sup> tells us that a significant number of mothers with children are in the paid labour force:
  - 65.8 % had a youngest child less than 3 years (623,000 children)
  - 73.4 % had a youngest child 3-5 years (695,000 children)
  - 80.7 % had a youngest child 6-12 years (1,990,700 children)
- In 2001, Canada had regulated child care spaces for only 12.1 % of the children from birth to 12.<sup>1</sup>

## **Are we really on our way to building a pan-Canadian child care system?**

Many parents want to know:

- will this money make licensed child care more affordable?
- will it create new licensed and affordable child care spaces to meet the needs of families who can't access licensed child care now?
- is this new federal funding a significant first step?

**If the provincial/territorial governments spend the new federal funding on quality, licensed child care (centres, family child care homes, preschools/nursery schools) it is at best only a tiny step forward for young children.**

- "Dollarwise", it ignores the real child care needs of Canada's children and their families. If you estimate that in a calendar year there are 240 child care days, this new funding at its maximum in year five can only provide approximately 60 to 80 cents per day for each child from birth to five years.
- This funding is completely inadequate to either
  - ✓ apply a bandaid in the short term, or to
  - ✓ address the real needs for building a comprehensive child care system for Canada's youngest children.

## RESOURCES

<sup>1</sup> *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2001*  
Childcare Resource and Research Unit report, 2003  
<http://www.childcarecanada.org/pubs/bn/ECEC2001summary.html>

<sup>2</sup> *A National Child Care Strategy: Getting the Architecture Right Now*  
November 2002  
<http://www.johngodfrey.on.ca/pages/newfs.htm>

Complete Budget details:

<http://www.fin.gc.ca/budget03/brief/briefe.htm>

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