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Ontario reaches \$10-a-day child-care deal with federal government: sources

Ontario Premier Doug Ford's government has reached a deal with Ottawa for a \$10-a-day child-care program, senior officials close to the negotiations tell CBC News.

Ontario is the last province to sign on to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's national child-care plan. Ford and Trudeau are scheduled to announce the agreement Monday morning at a news conference in the Greater Toronto Area.

The deal commits the federal government to providing \$10.2 billion to Ontario over a five-year period to bring the average cost of a child-care spot down to \$10 per day in 2025, according to federal and provincial officials.

That is the same amount that the Trudeau government had offered to Ontario since negotiations on the child-care plan began last year.

For parents, the funding means an investment reduction of child-care fees by an average of 25 per cent, with a further 25 per cent drop a year from now.

The officials said the deal also includes a plan to create 86,000 new child-care spaces in Ontario by 2026, with the priority on not-for-profit operators.

Getting a deal helps neutralize what could have been a politically challenging election issue for Ford's Progressive Conservatives. The Ontario campaign is due to begin in less than six weeks, with election day slated for June 2.

Still, the time it took to get this deal will prompt questions about what his government accomplished

by waiting to sign. Previously, Ford had said the delay was because his government wanted to get the best deal possible for the province.

At an unrelated news conference in Toronto on Sunday before the agreement was signed, Ford said the \$10.2 billion offered over five years is not enough to get child-care costs in Ontario down to \$10 per day.

But when asked whether anything was holding up a deal, Ford replied: "No, I think we're good. We've worked very closely with the federal government, they've been phenomenal partners as they've always been, and we look forward to the announcement."

A provincial official told CBC News that the deal gives Ontario "way more flexibility in how we can spend the money over the term of the agreement in comparison to other provinces." But the official did not provide specifics about what that flexibility includes.

"At the end of the day a funding formula for P.E.I. can't be the same as one for a province like Ontario," said the official. "Ontario has a pretty complex child-care system."

A federal official said the main flexibility in the agreement involves allowing Ontario to spend the \$1.1 billion that was allocated for the 2021-22 fiscal year during the second year of the deal, which starts on April 1.

It's likely to take a number of weeks or months before the money would start flowing to what child-care facilities to bring down the price that parents pay. However, parents would eventually be able to expect a

retroactive refund of 25 per cent of their child-care costs incurred from April 1 until the sticker price comes down.

One sticking point for Ontario had been whether Ottawa would continue to fund the child-care program after the five-year deal expires in 2026.

The provincial official said Ontario "secured funding outside of the five-year agreement" but declined to say how much funding or for what time period.

In its budget last year, the Trudeau government committed to permanent annual child-care funding beyond 2026. Ontario's minimum yearly share of that would be \$2.9 billion.

The federal child-care plan is being pitched as a way to boost Canada's economy by making it easier for parents to return to the labour force after the birth of their children.

Toddler care costs \$70 per day. Child care costs in Ontario are among the highest in the country, with a full-time spot for a toddler in Toronto typically costing around \$1,600 a month, in the range of \$70 a day. Infant daycare costs more, and even care for preschool children can bring fees approaching \$60 per day.

The agreement includes commitments to increase wages for registered early childhood educators in Ontario, in an effort to encourage more people to work in child care. The minimum wage for program staff would be set at \$18 an hour, with both increasing by \$20 a year, with the federal official said.

IRCC back to 12-month processing for spousal sponsorship applications



"Common-law partner: They must have lived with the sponsor for at least 12 straight months.

"Conjugal partner: They must have been in a relationship with the sponsor for at least one year, live outside of Canada, and cannot live with the sponsor in their country or marry them due to significant legal or immigration causes. For example, they live in a country where same-sex marriage or divorce is not allowed. Sponsors need to prove to IRCC they could not live together or get married in their partner's country.

Foreign nationals must be at least 18 years old to be sponsored for immigration under all of these categories.

Also, foreign nationals must pass a

health, security, and criminality screening and therefore be considered admissible to Canada.

How to apply

There are two types of sponsorship processes: inland and outland sponsorship. The key difference is that couples applying for sponsorship from within Canada are considered inland, while those whose foreign national spouse is abroad will be filed under outland.

To be eligible for inland sponsorship, the foreign spouse or common-law partner must also have valid temporary status in Canada, either as a worker, student, or visitor. During the inland sponsorship application process, the sponsored person will be able to continue to

live, work or study in Canada. While pursuing inland sponsorship, the sponsored spouse may be able to get a Spousal Open Work Permit, which would allow them to work while they are waiting on the results of their application.

It is generally expected that inland sponsorship applicants will remain in Canada while their application is being processed. If the spouse or common-law partner does not plan to stay in Canada or needs to be able to travel outside the country while the application is being processed, outland sponsorship may be a better option.

Outland sponsorship is for foreign spouses who are not legally living in Canada at the time of the application.

Applicants residing in Canada may also opt for outland sponsorship as it allows for travel to and from Canada while the application process is underway. It may be the best option for those whose work or personal situation requires them to leave the country.

Canadian permanent residents can sponsor their spouse as an outland applicant from abroad. If they do this though, they will have to demonstrate that they will return to Canada with their spouse if the application is approved.

In addition to married and common-law partners, is also possible to sponsor conjugal partners through outland sponsorship. Conjugal partners are couples who have been in an ongoing and committed relationship for a period of at least 12 months but, due to significant legal constraints or other factors beyond their control, they cannot live together.

Steps to submit a sponsorship application

Applicants will submit two applications together. One is for sponsorship and the other is a permanent residence application.

Step 1: Get an application package from IRCC.

Step 2: Pay the application fees to IRCC, which include processing fees, a right of permanent residence fee, and a biometrics fee. These fees need to be paid on IRCC's website.

Step 3: Mail the completed application to IRCC.

IRCC's processing standard is 12 months.

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Canada ends pre-arrival COVID-19 test requirements for vaccinated travellers

Canada lifts the pre-arrival COVID-19 test requirements for vaccinated travellers and Ottawa's transit commission meets for the first time in 2022.

CITV News Ottawa, as looks at five stories to watch in Ottawa this week.

CANADA LIFTS PRE-ARRIVAL TESTS FOR VACCINATED TRAVELLERS

Fully vaccinated travellers will not need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test to enter Canada starting Friday.

The federal government is lifting the pre-arrival COVID-19 testing requirements for fully vaccinated travellers at land, air and marine borders as of 12:01 a.m. on April 1. Passengers may still be subjected to random PCR testing on arrival at Canadian airports. The federal government says travellers selected for mandatory random testing are not required to quarantine while awaiting their test result.



All travellers will still be required to submit their mandatory information in the ArriveCAN app before arrival to Canada.

Currently, all fully vaccinated travellers must show proof of a health professional administered negative rapid antigen test before a flight or crossing at a land border.

ALL EYES ON COVID-19 NUMBERS

All eyes will be on the COVID-19 situation in Ottawa this week, one week after the mandatory mask

mandate for indoor settings was lifted. Last week, Ottawa Public Health warned there was "evidence of an increase in COVID-19 transmission" in Ottawa, with the wastewater viral signal and test positivity rate increasing.

"Given the lifting of public health measures, increased mobility, social gatherings and the return to school following March Break, we can expect to continue to see evidence of increased transmission in the community," deputy medical officer of health Dr. Brent Moloughney said.

Moloughney says public health will work with Ottawa health officials on "potential options" if key indicators "shift in concerning way."

Ottawa Public Health is encouraging people to wear masks in indoor public places.

TRANSIT COMMISSION MEETS FOR FIRST TIME IN 2022
Ottawa's transit commission will meet for the first time in 2022 this

weekend, giving councillors and transit riders the first update on the state of the \$2 billion Confederation Line this year.

The transit commission was scheduled to meet in February, but all committee meetings were cancelled due to the "Freedom Convoy" demonstration.

The first item on the agenda is an update on the Confederation Line and bus service update. Staff will provide the first update on the Confederation Line since mid-November, when LRT service had just resumed following a train derailment in September.

Transit commissioners will also vote on a motion calling on the federal government to cover the cost of any operating deficit while federal workers continue to work from home.

A motion from Coun. Riley Brookington and Carol Anne Meenan notes the vast majority of federal public servants have been working from home since March 2020, and "OC Transpo has not realized millions of dollars in fare revenue."

OC Transpo posted a \$15 million surplus last year, due to unfilled staffing vacancies and lower O-Train maintenance costs. Federal and provincial funding helped cover fare revenue losses in 2021.

Ontario reaches \$13.2 billion child-care deal: Here's what parents need to know

Ontario has signed a \$13.2 billion deal with the federal government that will cut child-care fees in the province in half by the end of the year, the prime minister said Monday.

CBC News reported Sunday, based on government sources, that the province and federal government had struck a deal following months of negotiations.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Premier Doug Ford appeared together Monday morning alongside other political leaders to formally announce the agreement at a YMCA child care centre in Brampton, Ont.

The Ontario deal is the last one needed to fulfil Trudeau's pledge to bring child-care fees down to an average of \$10 per day in every province and territory by the end of 2026. The provincial government is hoping to implement \$10-a-day child care, although that rate isn't expected to happen until September 2025.

Trudeau said the new program will offer a savings of an average of \$6,000 per child, "real money for families" at a moment when a range of household costs are going up.

He also called the deal a "historic moment" now that all provinces and territories have signed child-care deals.

"Child care is becoming a reality for all Canadians," he said.

Ford, who will begin a provincial election campaign in a few weeks, framed the deal as one of several ways his Progressive Conservative government is saving people money, referencing other measures such as rebates on licence plate renewal fees.

"It's a great deal for Ontario parents and the right deal for Ontarians," he said. "It's a deal that provides flexibility in how we allocate federal funding, flexibility that is critical for making this deal work for Ontario."

In the interim, parents can expect their fees to drop by around 25 per cent. Here's what will happen in the coming months:

As of April 1, 2022, families with children five years old and younger in participating licensed



child care centres, including licensed home care, will see fees reduced up to 25 per cent to a minimum of \$12 per day.

"Parent rebates, retroactive to April 1, will begin in May. The rebate is in place to account for child-care operators that may need extra time to readjust their fees. Parents will receive the rebate automatically in such instances."

"In December 2022, fees will be reduced further to about 50 per cent on average."

The deal outlines a plan to further slash rates in the coming years. Here's what the longer-term outlook includes:

"In September 2024 fees will be reduced even further."

"A final reduction in September 2025 will bring fees down to an average of \$10 per day."

The five-year child-care program was to include \$1 billion for Ontario in year one, which is 2021-22. Since that fiscal year ends in four days, the federal government is allowing them more flexibility to push most of that spending into future years.

Ontario had wanted more certainty beyond the life of the original five-year deal - though the federal government's budget last year said funding for the program after the fifth year would be \$9 billion annually - and got a commitment of \$2.9 billion for year six.

The deal will also see Ontario create 86,000 child-care spaces, though that number includes more than 15,000 spaces already created since 2019.

Trudeau stressed that creating these additional spaces won't be easy.

"To create spaces, well that can be done," he said. "But creating high-quality spaces... that's a bigger challenge. And then making those high-quality spaces that we've created affordable, at \$10 a day, that's even harder."

In spite of this, the prime minister said there's a firm commitment to get it done.

As for where these new spaces will be built, Ford said his government will focus on areas of need, including high-priority neighbourhoods and Indigenous communities.

He also addressed the need to attract more child-care workers to fill these additional spaces.

"The one part that is absolutely critical... getting more people to work in early childhood education," Ford said. "To be frank, they deserve more money. That's my opinion and we're going to work on that."

Following the announcement, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce said affordable and accessible child care will allow more women to participate in the labour market as the economy continues to recover from the pandemic.

The statement also addressed the need for an adequate supply of qualified workers.

"This will require recognizing foreign credentials, enhancing online training, fast-tracking in-school credentials, and developing financial support for underemployed populations to access training opportunities," said Claudia Dessanti, Senior Policy Manager of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in a news release.

Ontario announces new process for how people will register their car

The Ontario government has announced changes to how new vehicles will be registered when people purchase a car.

On Tuesday, the government launched "Digital Dealership Registration" (DDR), which they say eliminates paperwork, saves time, and cuts costs for consumers and businesses.

The new process allows car dealerships to register vehicles online and issue permits and licence plates directly to purchasers.

"At full implementation, the new DDR process will, for the first time ever, provide over 7,000 Ontario car dealerships access to an online program that eliminates duplicative paperwork and time-consuming trips to Service Ontario centres," the government said Tuesday.

The government said that once fully implemented, DDR will move 4.8 million dealership registration transactions online per year, including the registration of pre-owned vehicles, vehicle transfers, and vehicle permit replacements, all of which must currently be conducted in person.

"In addition to making vehicle registrations faster and more efficient, DDR will also facilitate more accurate and error-free registrations while protecting the security and privacy of Ontarians' data," the government said.

Earlier this year, the government ended fees for licence plate stickers in Ontario, which saves motorists \$120 per year.

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Brampton house fire leaves parents, 3 children dead

An early morning fire that ripped through a house in Brampton Monday has left two parents and their three children dead and one adult in critical condition.

Brampton Fire Chief Bill Boyes said fire crews were met with heavy smoke and flames when they arrived on the scene of the fire at Conestoga Drive and Sutter Avenue at approximately 2 a.m.

The three-alarm fire made for a "difficult entry" for crews on arrival, Boyes said.

"Our hearts are absolutely breaking," Boyes said.

"What happened here today, to lose three children and two adults, with one additional person in life-threatening condition, it's absolutely tragic."

Two of the children were rushed by paramedics to hospital in life-threatening condition and died shortly after, Peel police Const. Heather Cannon told reporters at the scene. Two adults and a third child were found dead at the home.

Emergency officials have not released the identities of the victims



But Boyes said they believe the ages of the children are six, eight and 11. He also said the two adults who were pronounced dead at the scene are the mother and father of the children.

The fire department did everything they could to rescue the occupants of the home, the chief said.

"They risked their lives to go into this fire and get these people out," Boyes said, noting mental health resources would be made available to the firefighters.

"Unfortunately, it was a terrible

outcome."

One adult was able to get out of the house and was rushed to a trauma centre in critical condition.

Two other adults were able to leave the house through the basement without physical injuries, Boyes said.

"My prayers and condolences are with the family & friends who have been impacted by this devastating fire on Conestoga Dr in Brampton. And grateful for the tireless efforts of our first responders who faced very difficult conditions," Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown said in a tweet Monday morning.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford also extended his condolences at an announcement on child-care in Brampton.

"I want to express just how sad I was to learn of the tragic deaths of a family here in Peel, including the loss of three precious children," Ford said Monday morning.

"I just can't imagine the hurt that's being felt by the family and friends and the entire community. You'll be in all our prayers."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau,

who was with Ford, said his thoughts were with family and friends of those who died.

"We're all thinking of those affected by this horrible, heartbreaking tragic fire," he said.

Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie also said she was "heartbroken" to learn about the fire.

Boyes said firefighters were working to ensure there were no hotspots in the home on Monday morning before an investigation into the cause of the deadly fire could begin.

The investigation will be done in collaboration with the Office of the Fire Marshal, Peel Regional Police and Brampton fire investigators, he noted.

Boyes urged the public to follow fire safety procedures.

"If you're at home, check your smoke alarms. Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm. And make sure your family and your friends and all those that you live with know what to do in the event of a fire, know how to get out," he said.

"We just don't want to see in Brampton or across Ontario another tragic fire happen."

Conestoga Drive between Sandauiway Parkway East and

Camrose Court is closed, Peel police said.

comes to developing a national dental care programme for low-income

Canadians and a national prescription drug programme, and on issues like climate and housing.

He said the NDP will continue to oppose Mr. Trudeau's government when necessary and will be carefully tracking the results of the agreement.

"If they (the Liberals) fall short on what we've agreed, then the deal doesn't continue," he said. Mr. Singh, however, expressed optimism about the deal and compared it to a marriage.

"I'm not going into this hoping it will fail," he said. "I want this to work, but we're going into this eyes wide open. We have full accountability. We have the ability to withdraw support."

Ahead of Mr. Trudeau's announcement, Candice Bergen, leader of Canada's Conservative Party, slammed the Liberal-NDP agreement as a "callous attempt by Trudeau to hold on to power."

"This is little more than backdoor socialism," she said in a statement. "This is an NDP-liberal attempt at government by blackmail."

Nation-building is replaced by vote-buying, secret deal-making over parliamentary debate, and opportunism over accountability."

Last year, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh ruled out a formal agreement with the Liberals, but said that he was willing to support Mr. Trudeau.

At a separate news conference on Tuesday, Mr. Singh said that his party views the agreement as the best way to "help people," particularly when it

function with predictability and stability, present and implement budgets and get things done for Canadians," he said.

The deal differs to a coalition, where parties share power. Instead, the Liberals - who failed to win a majority in the past two elections - will continue to govern as a minority, but with assurances the NDP will support them in confidence votes.

While Mr. Trudeau predicted that the two parties would continue to disagree in some areas, he said they had identified some key policy areas in which they share similar objectives,

Canadians must confront 'very high' cost of conflict with Russia: UN ambassador

The cost of conflict with Russia will inevitably be "very high" as the world becomes more dangerous, says Canada's ambassador to the United Nations.

In an interview with The West Block's guest host Eric Stephenson, Rob Rae said rising defence spending and other costs will be something Canadians need to confront amid the continued global dangers in the wake of Russia's violent and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

"I think that an inevitability given the nature of some of the crises that we're facing around the world, and that's something we have to face up to as Canadians," he said.

"It's going to be more expensive for us living in the world than it was before, because the cost of conflict is very high. And we're not living in an easy world at the moment," Rae added.

"The world is a difficult place right now."

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is now in its second month, but has appeared to stall in many areas as Ukrainian defenders mount a fierce resistance that has been praised around the world.

But the slow advance by Russia has sparked fears that Russian President Vladimir Putin may turn to even more violent methods, including chemical, biological or nuclear attacks, to gain momentum.

Over recent weeks, the imagery of Russian attacks targeting civilians has grown and Ukrainian officials have alleged that attacking troops used white phosphorus munitions - a banned chemical weapon.

Hundreds of civilians are dead, even as the numbers fluctuate amid shifting battlefield dynamics.

Ukraine rejects Russia's demand to surrender devastated Mariupol.

Among the worst of the violence centres on the besieged port city of Mariupol, where civilians have been trapped with dwindling water and food for weeks. International demands for safe passage for civilians as well as aid access into areas being devastated by the invasion continue to grow.

Last week, members of the United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly voted to isolate Russia. The non-binding motion won support from three-quarters of

members, while only five supported Russia.

The rest abstained.

That motion demanded humanitarian access as well as the protection of hospitals and civilian infrastructure, medical workers, civilians, aid workers and journalists.

In addition, the motion demanded an end to Russian sieges of cities including Mariupol.

Rae billed the decision by China to abstain rather than vote in support of Russia as "significant," and said said securing a ceasefire is vital.

But the stakes for Putin in doing so are enormous, said a former American ambassador to NATO.

"He has taken an enormous risk launching this military invasion against Ukraine. It's not going well," said Kurt Volker, who also served as the U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine until 2019.

"I don't see how he can be defeated in Ukraine and remain as president of Russia."

Volker said all indications so far suggest it will not be possible for Putin to win. "They simply don't have the means to do it."

"This means he's in a very dangerous and desperate position and could very well resort to weapons of mass destruction or something else, trying to pull a rabbit out of the hat to see if he can still survive," he added.

"We have to warn him against that."

U.S. President Joe Biden warned last week that a chemical attack on Ukraine by Russia "would trigger a response in kind."

But American leaders have warned against the use of chemical weapons before, only to face accusations of failing to live up to their warnings.



Former president Barack Obama described the use of chemical weapons by Syria's dictator Bashar al-Assad as a "red line" in 2012.

Assad, who received military support from Russia during the Syrian Civil War, went on to use sarin gas repeatedly during the conflict, according to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as well as the Berlin-based Global Public Policy Institute.

Obama deferred a proposal to launch military operations in Syria to the U.S. Congress, which voted down the idea. The U.S. did not take military action against Assad following that vote.

Assad remains in power.

Western allies vow action if Russia uses chemical weapons in Ukraine.

Volker also suggested that despite NATO leaders categorically and repeatedly ruling out a no-fly zone in Ukraine, there may be a value in limited forms of doing so.

He pointed to "the possibility of a limited no-fly zone for humanitarian purposes, perhaps over Kyiv and west, in order to make sure that civilians do not have the fear of aircraft dropping bombs on them from overhead, and that humanitarian aid can get there safely."

"Another idea that's been proposed recently is military escort of humanitarian flights - also something I think worth looking at," said Volker, adding NATO should also consider coordinating military gear on the border with Poland that Ukraine can come and drive across the border for their own use.

"We need to start laying out some of these lines for Putin so that we diminish his appetite for escalation as his forces are losing in Ukraine."

There were calls for Hillier's arrest in February when he tweeted people should "keep calling" after Ottawa police tweeted that people had to stop calling "critical emergency and operational phone lines" to express displeasure over police actions to clear streets.

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MPP Randy Hillier facing 9 more charges after Ottawa convoy protest

MPP Randy Hillier surrenders to police on charges related to convoy protests.

eastern Ontario provincial politician has surrendered to police and is facing more charges, this time related to the convoy protest and occupation in downtown Ottawa this winter.

Ottawa police announced nine charges against Independent Liberal MPP Randy Hillier in a Monday morning news release, saying they had complaints "about social media posts and other activities of an individual" during the so-called Freedom Convoy.

The charges are:

One count of assaulting a peace officer.

Two counts of obstructing or resisting a peace officer.

One count of obstructing or resisting someone aiding a public or peace officer.

Three counts of counselling an unlicensed individual to offend, two of them considered mischief.

Two counts of mischief or obstructing property exceeding \$5,000.

Hillier surrendered at Ottawa police headquarters Monday morning. He told reporters he was doing so after getting a call from police on Sunday.

He denied assaulting an officer, saying he only greeted people "with love and affection and embrace and handshakes."

"So unless handshakes or warm embraces are now considered assault, I have no idea," he said.

Lawyer David Amber said he'd like a Monday bail hearing. Ottawa police said Hillier is expected in court Monday.

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Canada's NDP agrees to support Trudeau's Liberals until 2025

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the deal between the Liberals and NDP will mean the government can deliver more to Canadians.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal minority government has reached a deal with the New Democratic Party (NDP) to stay in power until 2025.

In exchange, the Liberals will support the left-leaning NDP on several of the party's key priorities in parliament.

Mr. Trudeau said on Tuesday that he believes the agreement will provide "stability" for Canadians.

The move has been strongly criticised by Canada's Conservative Party.

Speaking at a news conference on Tuesday, Mr. Trudeau said that the deal - which he termed a "loyalty and confidence" agreement - begins today and will continue through the end of Canada's current parliament in 2025.

"What this means is that during this uncertain time, the government can

function with predictability and stability, present and implement budgets and get things done for Canadians," he said.

The deal differs to a coalition, where parties share power. Instead, the Liberals - who failed to win a majority in the past two elections - will continue to govern as a minority, but with assurances the NDP will support them in confidence votes.

While Mr. Trudeau predicted that the two parties would continue to disagree in some areas, he said they had identified some key policy areas in which they share similar objectives,

including healthcare, housing and the environment.

"These are things that fit within our universe of priorities, but are easy to move forward in a constructive way that assures that, on a broad range of issues, parliament gets to focus on delivering for Canadians," he added.

Last year, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh ruled out a formal agreement with the Liberals, but said that he was willing to support Mr. Trudeau.

At a separate news conference on Tuesday, Mr. Singh said that his party views the agreement as the best way to "help people," particularly when it

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