

Child Care Funding Update: Saskatchewan—Years Two and Three (2022–23 and 2023–24)

Implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreements

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A Cardus Research Brief

Introduction

Canada's federal budget for 2021 included a \$27 billion commitment to establish a \$10-a-day child care program within five years. Combined with additional funding, a total of \$30 billion was committed in years one through five, with a projected annual cost of at least \$9.2 billion in year five and later. The federal government then entered into negotiations with each province and territory (negotiating a unique, asymmetrical agreement with Quebec, which had a program already) to jointly determine the funding and goals. These negotiations resulted in a *Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement* with each province and territory (which we refer to as “the Agreement” in this brief). As of September 2025, eleven provinces and territories have renewed their Agreements through fiscal year 2030–31. Saskatchewan has not renewed its Agreement.

Cardus conducted its own costing estimate in 2021 prior to the release of the Agreements, concluding that the federal government had underestimated the cost and complexity of

implementing a national child care program.¹ Cardus is now studying the funds spent and goals achieved in each province and territory as data become available.

The Agreement with Saskatchewan was signed on August 13, 2021.²

This brief presents the results for years two and three for Saskatchewan (fiscal years 2022–23 and 2023–24), which are April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, and April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024).³

Our Perspective on Childcare Policy

At Cardus, we recognize that families use diverse forms of childcare to meet their needs and desires. Care is often costly, whether provided in a licensed facility, by a provider in the child's home, or by a parent who forfeits earned income to care for their child. We propose policies that support parental preference across a diverse spectrum of care options.

Summary

The implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in Saskatchewan in year two (2022–23) and year three (2023–24) of the Agreement is a story of both progress and underperformance.

On the positive side, the province was among the first regions in Canada to reduce the average parent fee to \$10 a day, though the implementation wasn't without challenges. The province delayed the full implementation of the plan twice following a much-celebrated March 2023 announcement. The implementation plan and timeline were incompatible with how some child care programs structured contracts and arrangements with parents. The initial plan omitted part-time care options, resulting in the exclusion of some families and disincentivizing programs from offering part-time care options. This was partially rectified when the province created a daily fee option for families using child care fewer than ten days a month.

The province also increased wage-enhancement funding, leading to increased average pay for certified Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in 2022–23 and 2023–24. Saskatchewan allocated funding to post-secondary institutions to offer bursaries and tuition-free training and education opportunities. Staffing levels across the province increased during 2022–23 and 2023–24. Under the Agreement, the province was to increase the portion of child care staff with ECE certifications by 15 percent. Yet, the portion of certified child care staff decreased before edging up slightly by March 2024, but was still below the 2021 baseline average of 70 percent. The impact of these funding allocations to post-secondary institutions will be better understood in future years as graduates potentially transition into the workforce.

1 A. Mrozek, P.J. Mitchell, and B. Dijkema, "Look Before You Leap: The Real Costs and Complexities of National Daycare," Cardus, 2021, <https://cardus.ca/research/family/reports/look-before-you-leap>.

2 Government of Canada, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026* (August 2021), <https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories/saskatchewan-canada-wide-2021.html>.

3 The year-one report can be found at <https://www.cardus.ca/research/family/research-brief/child-care-funding-update-saskatchewan-year-one-2021-22/>.

The province underperformed in expanding child care capacity despite over \$112 million in total spending on space creation during 2022–23 and 2023–24. Saskatchewan targeted the creation of 6,100 new spaces in 2022–23, but posted just 2,801 new operational or in-development spaces. The following year, the province reported over 11,000 new operational and in-development spaces. This sudden growth was largely due to the inclusion of nearly 7,000 pre-existing spaces toward the total number of new spaces. The province’s reported space creation number exceeded the actual growth in capacity. Another concern was that the number of non-standard-hour care spaces declined by more than half between 2022–23 and 2023–24.

Agreement at a Glance

Term: April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2026.

Federal Funding Estimate

Table 1 displays the projected federal share of financial provisions for each year of the Agreement.

Major Targets

- Reduce fee to 50 percent of the 2019 average fee in year one, and to an average of \$10 a day by year five.
- Increase the number of regulated child care spaces to 59 percent coverage for children under age six by year five.
- Create 12,100 full-time-equivalent spaces across years one and two, exclusively in not-for-profit and public facilities, and a total of 28,000 new spaces in not-for-profit and public facilities by year five.

Table 1. Projected Federal Share of Financial Provisions to Saskatchewan, by Year

Year	Projected Amount
One (2021–22)	\$114,410,468
Two (2022–23)	\$179,850,668
Three (2023–24)	\$223,996,682
Four (2024–25)	\$264,633,193
Five (2025–26)	\$316,567,960
Total	\$1,099,458,971

Note: These amounts are subject to annual adjustments for population change.
Source: Government of Canada, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*.

Pre-Agreement Baseline Measures

- Provincial child care budget of \$71.2 million in 2019–20.⁴
- Average parental fees of \$335 to \$1,300 a month as of March 2021, depending on the child’s age and type of facility.⁵ This is the equivalent of about \$11 to \$43 a day.
- 17,665 full-time-equivalent regulated spaces as of March 2021.⁶

4 Government of Saskatchewan, *Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Annual Report for 2020–21* (2021), 37.

5 *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*.

6 *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*.

Agreement Targets and Progress

The Canada-wide Agreements share a similar structure, focusing on four priorities: affordability for parents, increasing access through space creation, making child care more inclusive, and improving the quality of care.

The tables shown here summarize the commitments made, the years in which targets are to be achieved, and the federal funding allocated to the targets under the Agreement. The tables also summarize the progress made toward the target and the funding spent on these efforts in years two and three.⁷

Affordability

The province successfully reduced fees to an average of \$10 a day in 2023–24, about two and a half years ahead of the 2025–26 deadline. This achievement was not without challenges. Saskatchewan announced the fee reduction in March 2023, but delayed the full implementation twice, until September of 2023.

The Parent Fee Reduction Grant was the primary tool used to lower fees. The province estimated that 24,700 children were supported in 2022–23 and 26,244 children benefited in 2023–24 through the grants.⁸ Saskatchewan spent \$73.04 million of the \$125.47 million allocation for 2022–23.

Table 2. Affordability Commitments and Results, Saskatchewan, 2022–23 and 2023–24

Target	Commitments		Results	
	Timeline	Federal funding	Progress	Federal funding spent
Parental fee reduced to 50% of 2019 levels by end of 2022, and to \$10 a day on average by 2025–26	2022–23	\$125,474,000	Fees reduced by an average of 50% by September 2022	\$73,041,000
	2023–24	\$110,000,000	Fees reduced to an average of \$10 a day, 2.5 years ahead of schedule	\$115,200,000 ¹

¹ Unspent funding carried over from 2022–23 was used toward this target.

Sources: Government of Canada, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2022–2023 Annual Report*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2023–2024 Annual Report*.

7 Unless otherwise noted, the results shown are taken from the following sources: Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2022–2023 Annual Report*, <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/api/v1/products/123619/formats/143892/download>; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2023–2024 Annual Report*, <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/api/v1/products/125782/formats/147095/download>.

8 The estimated number of children benefiting from the grants exceeds the number of child care spaces. The estimate assumes some spaces are used by multiple part-time children, and that some children are transitioning into spaces as others exit.

In 2023–24, the province exceeded the \$110 million allocation, spending \$115.20 million, using unspent funds carried over from the previous year to cover the \$5 million difference.

Accessibility

The province committed to creating 28,000 new full-time-equivalent spaces for children under age six by the end of the Agreement in March 2026. Over the first two years of the Agreement, Saskatchewan targeted the creation of 12,100 spaces by the end of March 2023, with 6,100 of those spaces slated for creation in 2022–23.

The province fell well short of the target, with 2,801 net new spaces created or in development during 2022–23. The total two-year result was 2,642 new spaces in operation, with an additional 2,575 spaces in development, for a total of 5,217 new spaces since March 2021. This was considerably short of the two-year target of 12,100 new spaces.

One year later, in 2023–24, the province reported creating 11,048 new full-time spaces in just twelve months. How did Saskatchewan achieve such rapid growth?

The province counted 6,742 pre-existing spaces in the pre-K program, Early Learning Intensive Support program, and the Children Communicating, Connecting and in Community program toward the space creation target. The pre-existing spaces were recognized because the programs adopted the provincial curriculum, *Play and Exploration*.

Saskatchewan also counted 296 school-based spaces allocated for development. The province funded the capital costs, but the spaces would be eligible for federal fee-reduction funding under the Agreement. Saskatchewan reported that 2,583 centre spaces were created or in development in 2023–24. Additionally, 1,427 newly operational family child care home spaces were created in 2023–24, including unlicensed programs that transitioned to licensed programs.

With the inclusion of pre-existing spaces and spaces in development, the space creation numbers overstate the actual growth in capacity during 2022–23 and 2023–24.

The Agreement states that non-standard-hour care is eligible for federal funds, though the action plan for the first two years does not specifically identify targets in this area. Data from the 2023–2024 report show that the number of extended care spaces in the province declined from 519 spaces in March 2023 to 235 spaces by March 2024.

As for funding amounts allocated to accessibility, Saskatchewan applied carry-over funds from 2021–22 to the 2022–23 allocation, spending \$61.84 million. The original allocation was \$33.50 million. In 2023–24 the province allocated \$58.30 million and spent \$50.90 million.

The allocations for 2022–23 and 2023–24 were dispersed through various grants. In 2022–23 the province offered one-time funding for capital and start-up costs to new centres and family child care homes. In an effort to combat inflation, 702 centres and family child care homes were given an Operational Support Grant of \$750 per space. The province also offered a one-time Preventative Maintenance and Repair Grant to 298 centres.

In 2023–24, a one-time Space Development Capital grant of up to \$10,000 per space was awarded to fifty-one centres. Saskatchewan distributed 217 Start-Up Grants to centres and family child

care homes: centres were eligible for \$861 per space, and family child care homes were eligible for between \$3,325 and \$4,025 per home for renovation and construction costs, equipment costs, and learning resources. The number of centres and family child care homes that received the Operational Support Grant, intended to combat inflation, increased in 2023–24 to 811 facilities.

Table 3. Accessibility Commitments and Results, Saskatchewan, 2022–23 and 2023–24

Target	Commitments		Results	
	Timeline	Federal funding	Progress	Federal funding spent
Create 6,100 full-time-equivalent spaces	2022–23	\$33,501,000	2,801 net new spaces created or in development during 2022–23	\$61,843,000 ¹
Create 28,000 full-time-equivalent spaces by March 2026 ²	2023–24	\$58,300,000	4,306 net new school-based, centre-based, and family child care home spaces were created or in development, and 6,742 pre-existing pre-K, Early Learning Intensive Support program, and the Children Communicating, Connecting and in Community program spaces were counted toward the new space target in 2023–24	\$50,900,000

¹Unspent funding carried over from 2021–22 was used toward this target.

²The provincial report does not provide a specific target for 2023–24.

Note: Not all new or in-development spaces were eligible for space creation funding under the Agreement.

Sources: Government of Canada, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2022–2023 Annual Report*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2023–2024 Annual Report*.

Inclusion

Inclusion initiatives in the Agreement were organized into four main targets: the distribution of the Enhanced Accessibility Grant; the transition of vulnerable children into care; the development of flexible inclusive care options; and consultation with First Nation and Métis organizations. The 2022–23 provincial report provided allocations for each of the four targets, and spending for three targets. The 2023–24 report provided a total allocation and spending amount for all inclusion initiatives combined.

The Enhanced Accessibility Grant was distributed in 2022–23 and 2023–24 for the purpose of supporting additional staff to work with children with high needs. Saskatchewan allocated \$200,000 in 2022–23, but spent \$2.48 million to support 193 children.⁹ The number of children supported through Agreement funding increased in 2023–24 to 267 children. In addition to Agreement funding, the province contributed funds and used funding from the *Canada–Saskatchewan Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement* in 2022–23 and 2023–24 to support additional children through the grant.

In 2022–23, the province aimed to transition 150 vulnerable children into child care programs. The Agreement defines vulnerable children as children with disabilities or requiring enhanced support, and children from racialized and language-minority communities. About fifty-three children entered child care programs through the initiative. The allocation to transition 150 vulnerable children was also used to support five Child Care Facilitator positions in Early Years Family Resource Centres, which are non-profit facilities focused on serving families through various programs, including drop-in activities. The province allocated a total of \$975,000 in 2022–23, spending \$400,000. The five Child Care Facilitator positions continued to be funded from the allocation in the Agreement in 2023–24.

Agreement funding was allocated toward developing flexible inclusive care options. In 2022–23, funds were used to hire four Developmental Consultants, with two positions established in Regina and two established in Saskatoon. The positions received additional Agreement funding in 2023–24. Agreement funds were also used to support specialized staff to work with children with complex medical needs, supporting twenty-one children in 2022–23 and twenty-six children in 2023–24. Saskatchewan reported that 102 ECEs at ten centres received training in inclusive practices.

The province held regular bi-weekly meetings with Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. Other supports for Métis and First Nations children were included under other Agreement priorities, such as funding for spaces for First Nations children.

9 The 193 children were supported through Agreement funding, and additional children were supported through provincial funds and an allocation from the *Canada–Saskatchewan Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*. It is unclear from the provincial report if the expenditure amount of \$2,481,000 includes the provincial and bilateral agreement funding.

Table 4. Inclusion Commitments and Results, Saskatchewan, 2022–23 and 2023–24

Commitments			Results	
Target	Timeline	Federal funding	Progress	Federal funding spent
Enhance accessibility for 100 children	2022–23	\$200,000	193 children supported by the Enhanced Accessibility Grant	\$2,481,000*
Assist the transition of 150 vulnerable children into care	2022–23	\$975,000	53 children transitioned, and 5 Child Care Facilitator positions funded	\$400,000
Develop flexible inclusive care options ¹	2022–23	\$501,000	4 developmental consultants hired, and 21 children with complex needs supported	\$390,000
Consult with First Nations and Métis organizations	2022–23	\$300,000	Bi-weekly meetings conducted with Métis Nation–Saskatchewan	N/A
Enhance accessibility*	2023–24	\$5,800,000		\$4,000,000
Assist the transition of vulnerable children into care	2023–24		5 Child Care Facilitator positions funded	
Develop flexible inclusive care options	2023–24		4 developmental consultant positions funded, and 26 children with complex needs supported	
Consult with First Nations and Métis organizations	2023–24		Bi-weekly meetings conducted with Métis Nation–Saskatchewan	

¹Under the Agreement action plan, flexible care options and support for 100 children with disabilities are listed as separate targets. The province combined the targets and funding allocations in the provincial annual report.

*Additional funding provided through the province and the Canada–Saskatchewan Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement toward this target.

Note: The 2023–24 provincial report provides the total allocation and spending for inclusion commitments, and does not provide allocations and spending per target.

Sources: Government of Canada, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2022–2023 Annual Report*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2023–2024 Annual Report*.

Quality

Quality initiatives focused on increasing the number of child care staff and the credentials of staff. There are three levels of ECE certification in the province: ECE I, ECE II, and ECE III.

Saskatchewan committed to increasing the percentage of ECE certified staff by 15 percent over the five-year Agreement. About 70 percent of child care staff had an ECE certification in March 2021, the baseline year. The province oversaw an increase in the number of child care staff from 3,759 in March 2021 to 4,847 in March 2024. During that time period, the percentage of staff with an ECE certification declined to 67 percent by March 2023, before increasing slightly to 68 percent by March 2024.

In 2022–23, about \$7.89 million was provided to Collège Mathieu, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology to develop tuition-free ECE certification and professional development opportunities. In 2023–24, \$11.30 million was allocated, with seven additional post-secondary institutions added to the previous three schools.

In 2022–23, the province allocated \$3.55 million to post-secondary institutions to establish bursary programs for ECE students through to 2025–26, and spent \$3 million. About 372 bursaries were funded in 2022–23 and 2023–24. The full impact of bursaries and tuition support on staffing and certification levels will likely not be realized until future years, when students graduate and enter the ECE workforce.

Agreement funds were allocated toward ECE Training Support Grants provided to operators for professional development, with \$528,000 distributed in 2022–23. The ECE Training Support Grant was also distributed in 2023–24, with 125 centres and family home child cares receiving the grants. The Saskatchewan Early Childhood Association received funding to provide leadership training to seventy-five centre leaders.

In an effort to attract and retain staff, the province used Agreement funds to increase the Wage Enhancement Grant in 2022–23 and 2023–24. Nearly 2500 certified ECEs benefited from the grant in 2022–23, and 3,102 certified ECEs benefited in 2023–24. Between March 2021 and March 2024, the average wage for certified ECEs increased between \$4.62 per hour and \$6.55 per hour depending on certification level. Child care operators also received the Workforce Enhancement Grant, which providers used to fund one-time bonuses and bonuses recognizing long-term service and advancement in certification levels. Some providers used the grants for payments toward benefits and pensions. Saskatchewan spent about \$10.1 million in 2022–23, and \$24.8 million in 2023–24.

The province allocated funds toward a one-time Play and Exploration Grant for new child care facilities for the purchase of indoor and outdoor equipment. A one-time Active Play Grant for equipment purchases and Winter Grant for outdoor equipment were also funded through the Agreement. The combined 2022–23 disbursement for the Play and Exploration Grant, Active Play Grant, and the Winter Grant was \$2.39 million, with approximately 147 facilities receiving Play and Exploration and Active Play Grants and 695 facilities receiving Winter Grants. The provincial report indicates that the Active Play Grant was distributed in 2023–24, though the number of recipients was unreported.

Finally, the Agreement action plan stated that the province would create a wage grid in 2022–23, though the document does not indicate that a wage grid would be implemented that year. Progress on the wage grid was unreported.

Table 5. Quality Commitments and Results, Saskatchewan, 2022-23 and 2023-24

Commitments			Results	
Target	Timeline	Federal funding	Progress	Federal funding spent
ECE training and professional development provided by post-secondary institutions	2022-23	\$4,700,000 ¹	743 ECE student seats and 2,797 professional development seats funded	\$7,886,000 ²
Provide bursaries for 150 full-time students	2022-23	\$3,550,000 ³	372 student bursaries	\$3,000,000
ECE Training Support Grants for 500 workers			Number of grants unreported	\$528,000
Wage Enhancement Grant, and Workforce Enhancement Grant	2022-23	\$11,000,000	2,485 ECEs benefited from the Wage Enhancement Grant, and 569 facilities received the Workforce Enhancement Grant	\$10,098,000 ⁴
Play and Exploration Grant, Active Play Grant, and Winter Grant	2022-23	N/A	147 facilities received Active Play, and Play and Exploration Grants, and 695 facilities received the Winter Grant	\$2,388,000
ECE training and professional development provided by post-secondary institutions	2023-24	\$39,600,000	1,069 ECE student seats and 2,032 professional development seats funded	\$11,300,000
Provide bursaries for 150 full-time students	2023-24		372 student bursaries	N/A
ECE Training Support Grants	2023-24		125 facilities received training grants and 75 centre leaders participated in leadership training	N/A
Wage Enhancement Grant, and Workforce Enhancement grant	2023-24		3,102 ECEs benefited from the Wage Enhancement Grant, and the number of facilities that received the Workforce Enhancement Grant was unreported	\$24,800,000
Active Play Grant	2023-24		Number of Active Play Grants distributed unreported	N/A
Develop wage grid for ECEs	2023-24	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹The \$4.7 million was allocated toward several targets under the Agreement action plan. It appears the province adjusted allocations, which is permitted under the terms of the Agreement.

²Two allocations for post-secondary institutions are combined, which include ECE student training, and professional development.

³The Agreement action plan combines bursaries and training grants in a single allocation in 2022-23.

⁴Additional funding toward this target provided through the *Canada-Saskatchewan Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement*.

Note: The 2023-24 provincial report does not provide allocations and spending for some targets.

Sources: Government of Canada, *Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2022-2023 Annual Report*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2023-2024 Annual Report*.

Administration

Administration funding was allocated toward program implementation, reporting and accountability, policy development, and licensing. In 2022–23, the province spent about \$1.76 million of the \$3.20 million allocation. In 2023–24, the province allocated \$5.40 million and spent \$2.90 million.

Table 6. Administration Commitments and Results, Saskatchewan, 2022–23 and 2023–24

Commitments			Results	
Target	Timeline	Federal funding	Progress	Federal funding spent
Administration	2022–23	\$3,200,000	Program implementation, reporting and accountability, policy development, and licensing	\$1,757,000
	2023–24	\$5,400,000		\$2,900,000

Sources: Government of Canada, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement—2021 to 2026*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2022–2023 Annual Report*; Government of Saskatchewan, *Canada–Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement 2023–2024 Annual Report*.

Legislative and Policy Changes

The Agreement allows the province to carry forward up to 60 percent of funding from year one to year two. A March 1, 2022 amendment increased the carry-forward allowance to 64 percent of 2021–22 funding to be carried over to 2022–23.

Additional Observations

The rapid implementation of parent fee reductions and the introduction of wage increases for certified ECEs were not without challenges.

As in other jurisdictions, the rapid reduction of parent fees caused an increase in demand for heavily subsidized care. As part of the space growth strategy, Saskatchewan targeted a portion of new spaces in rural and small population areas. Despite this effort, some rural child care facilities struggled to operate at full capacity. Many rural facilities offered competitive wages to attract ECEs who travelled distances to work. The wage enhancement measures allowed ECEs to earn more pay without having to commute to rural communities, making it more difficult for rural providers to attract ECEs.¹⁰

Implementing the \$10 a day fee ahead of the 2025–26 target date exposed communication gaps between the province and providers. The province announced in March 2023 that the \$10 a day fee

10 Brooke Kruger, “Sask. Daycares Experience Staffing Shortages Despite Government Grants,” *Global News*, February 1, 2023, <https://globalnews.ca/news/9448785/sask-daycare-staff-shortages/>.

would be implemented on April 1, but then delayed the full implementation until June, and then again until September 2023.¹¹

At issue was the incompatibility of the government implementation plan with the operating procedures of some facilities. The government plan would reduce the parent fee for full-time care to a monthly fee of \$217.50. The plan disrupted the sector in two ways.

First, part-time care was no longer eligible for Agreement fee subsidies. This reduced the incentive for providers to offer the option. Saskatoon family home child care provider Brittany Pelletier told *CBC News*, “Not only is this resulting in a loss of income for providers, but this will affect our ability to provide accessible care to more families who were utilizing part-time and drop-in spaces.”¹²

Second, some child care facilities had hourly or daily fee structures, while the government plan assumed a monthly fee structure. The change would have required operators to overhaul fee structures and write new contracts within a matter of weeks.¹³ Speaking to 980 CJME radio in May 2023, Nichole Kessel, director of Wiggles and Giggles Childcare Centre, said that among members in her child care operators’ association, “About half of our organizations have already committed to cutting their daily families because it’s not worth all the scheduling, and the food, and keeping the staff in place just to have a child at \$10 a day with no government subsidies.”¹⁴ She also noted that when members of the association met with the minister’s office, the government seemed unaware that not all providers operated under a monthly structure.¹⁵ The disruption caused by these changes was compounded by staff shortages. Kessel told *The World Spectator* that her facility could only operate seventeen of her thirty-six spaces because of staffing shortages.¹⁶

In June of 2023, the province indicated that families using care fewer than ten days a month could pay \$10 a day, with the planned full-time fee remaining at \$217.50 per month regardless of the number of days registered full-time families used.¹⁷ The implementation was delayed until September 2023, with the province indicating it would use the time to consult with operators.¹⁸

11 Government of Saskatchewan, *Saskatchewan to Achieve \$10 a Day Child Care by April 2023* (March 6, 2023), [https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2023/march/06/saskatchewan-to-achieve-\\$10-a-day-child-care-by-april-2023](https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2023/march/06/saskatchewan-to-achieve-$10-a-day-child-care-by-april-2023).

12 Brittany Pelletier as quoted by Laura Sciarpetti, “Sask. Child-Care Providers Say They Are Scrambling to Prepare after Province Rushed \$10/Day Program Rollout,” *CBC News*, March 15, 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/child-care-10-a-day-program-rollout-rushed-1.6778743>.

13 Lisa Schick, “‘Disappointing and Exhausting’: \$10-a-Day Child Care Rollout Not Smooth for Everyone,” *980 CJME* (blog), May 24, 2023, <https://www.cjme.com/2023/05/24/disappointing-and-exhausting-10-a-day-childcare-rollout-not-smooth-for-everyone/>.

14 Nichole Kessel as quoted by Schick in “‘Disappointing and Exhausting.’”

15 Schick, “‘Disappointing and Exhausting.’”

16 Sierra D’Souza Butts, “Ministry of Education Extends Timeline Before \$10 a Day Child Care Is Fully Implemented,” *World Spectator*, June 7, 2023, https://www.world-spectator.com/news_story.php?id=4817.

17 D’Souza Butts, “Ministry of Education Extends Timeline.”

18 D’Souza Butts, “Ministry of Education Extends Timeline.”



About Cardus Family

Cardus Family conducts, compiles, and disseminates research on family and marriage and their strengthening impact on civil society.

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