



THE CASE FOR UNIVERSAL, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE

Without universal access to affordable, high-quality child care, women's equality cannot be a reality.

IT OPENS UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN



In Alberta, women's employment lags behind men's, and women are twice as likely to work part-time compared to men. At home, they do twice the amount of unpaid work.

Lack of access to affordable, quality child care is a key barrier to women finding and keeping work.

Low-fee care accessible to all would open up opportunities for women to improve their economic security, while better balancing work and family.

IT REDUCES POVERTY



One in six children living with a female lone parent experiences poverty, compared to 1 in 20 children who grow up with two parents.

Better access to affordable, quality child care would allow lone mothers who live in poverty to look for or return to work and take part in education and training, so they can build better futures for themselves and their children.

IT BENEFITS CHILDREN



The early years of childhood are recognized as crucial for the development of cognitive and social abilities. High-quality child care enhances children's development and well-being and provides a foundation for life-long learning.

Ensuring access to high-quality care for *all* families would lead to better and more equitable outcomes for children.

IT BENEFITS OUR COMMUNITIES



When parents have access to affordable, quality child care, they can find and keep work, study, get training, and improve their family's economic situation while better balancing work and family.

Every dollar spent in early education has a \$2-\$7 return on investment over the long term. **An investment in child care is an investment in better outcomes for women, children, and whole communities.**



THE STATE OF CHILD CARE IN ALBERTA

Right now, child care is hard to access and unaffordable for most. More action is needed to ensure that *every* family that needs it can access quality care they can afford.

INEQUITABLE ACCESS FOR FAMILIES

In Alberta, there are only enough regulated child care spaces for 1 in 3 children younger than 5.



More than half of Calgary's children live in areas where there are three or more children competing for every available space. Lack of access limits parents' choices when it comes to the type of care or their preferred work-family balance.

HIGH COSTS

Monthly childcare fees are as much as rent or a mortgage payment. In Calgary, the average fee for a toddler is \$1,030.



If provider fees were capped, cost for parents could be cut down significantly, allowing families to improve their economic situation while better balancing work and family.

UNSTABLE CARE ENVIRONMENTS

Early childhood educators and care staff -- predominantly women -- earn some of the lowest wages in the province.



When wages are decent, we see less turnover and thus better quality environments. Public funding can ensure decent wages, making quality care affordable to *all* families.

THE PROMISE OF PUBLICLY FUNDED AFFORDABLE, QUALITY CHILD CARE

Public investment in affordable, quality care has the following benefits:

- With fees capped, more parents are able to access care they can afford.
- When providers can pay better wages and offer supports for educators, they are able to hire and retain better-trained staff, creating more stable care environments for children. They are also better equipped to support children with complex needs and offer care to infants.

Affordable, quality care for all is an investment in better outcomes for women, children, and whole communities.