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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Education and Child Care

### **Families no longer charged fees for child care waitlists**

VANCOUVER – Effective Monday, April 1, 2024, families looking for licensed child care can no longer be charged a fee to put their names on waitlists, removing a barrier to finding high-quality child care.

“Child care is expensive enough without fees adding up before families have secured child care,” said Mitzi Dean, Minister of State for Child Care. “Eliminating waitlist fees will mean that families no longer face having to spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars simply to find a child care space. We’re supporting families with the cost of child care, and now that starts when families are looking for a spot.”

Approximately 5% of providers, mostly in metropolitan areas, were charging families a fee to put their name on a waitlist. Because most families looking for child care reach out to a number of providers, this was a significant cost. Waitlist fees, most of which are non-refundable, ranged from \$25 to \$200 or more.

“As a parent, I can’t thank the government enough for adding rules to forbid charging for a waiting list,” said Gerónimo Ratcliffe. “Due to financial limitations and a limited number of openings, we were unable to afford enrolment fees of \$50 or higher across 20 or 30 different establishments. Not having this barrier will definitely help us find a place for our second baby and compete for the spots, no matter our financial status.”

Eliminating waitlist-related fees at government-funded child care centres makes access to child care more equitable for all families and is another way that government is reducing costs. Through B.C.’s child care affordability programs, government has brought the cost of child care for children 12 and younger down to \$18 from \$45, which is the current average daily cost before government reductions.

“As the mother of twins and a toddler, I have spent thousand of dollars on waitlist fees over the years, and I support this move by our provincial government to ban waitlist fees.” said Rory Richards. “It is one less financial barrier for young families. I look forward to when there are enough licensed child care spaces for families so we won’t need to worry about waitlists at all.”

In addition to the more than 15,000 spaces in \$10 a Day ChildCareBC program, more than 128,000 families are saving as much as \$900 per month per child through the fee-reduction program. When combined with the income-tested Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB), many families are paying \$10 a day or less for child care, including those not participating in the \$10 a Day program.

### **Quick Facts:**

- The ACCB is an income-tested provincial program providing as much as \$1,250 per month, per child, to help eligible low- and middle-income families with their child care costs.
  - Families with an income under \$45,000 per year may receive the maximum ACCB and pay nothing out of pocket for child care.
  - Families with an income of as much as \$111,000 per year may be eligible to receive additional child care support through ACCB.
- An average of 35,000 children received support through the Province's ACCB each month so far in 2023-24.

**Learn More:**

For more information about affordable child care options through ChildCareBC, visit:

[www.gov.bc.ca/childcare](http://www.gov.bc.ca/childcare)

To learn more about the fee reductions, visit: [www.gov.bc.ca/childcare/optin](http://www.gov.bc.ca/childcare/optin)

To apply for the ACCB, visit: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/affordablechildcarebenefit>

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