

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI)

Preschool and School-Age Expansion

Frequently Asked Questions for Families

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General Information for Families

- **What is the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative?**

The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative provides significant child care savings to families with children accessing care at a participating licensed facility. As of September 1, 2023, families will receive up to \$145 per month in savings for children enrolled in participating half-day preschools and/or school-age care programs (Grade 1 and up).

The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative is a voluntary program and has been in place since 2018; however, before September 1, 2023, it was only available to families with children in licensed child care programs kindergarten-aged and under. Effective September 1, 2023, fee reductions will be available at all participating funded licensed child care facilities, including school-age and half-day preschool programs.

Fee reductions are based on the age of the child and the type of care they receive, and the amount that families pay after the fee reductions are applied will depend on the fees charged by their provider.

- **What types of child care settings qualify for fee reductions?**

Licensed group and family child care facilities approved to receive base Child Care Operating Funding and offering care to children 12 and under are eligible to apply for the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. This includes licensed school age programs and half-day preschool programs.

Child care providers must apply (typically on an annual basis, and ongoing) in order for families to receive the benefit.

- **When will the new fee reductions come into effect?**

The expanded eligibility for preschool and children in Grade 1 and up will come into effect on September 1, 2023.

- **How many child care providers offer fee reductions in B.C.?**

Until now, the fee reductions were available to families with children in licensed child care programs kindergarten-aged and under (representing roughly 70,000 child care spaces). Approximately 93% of child care facilities, representing 95% of these child care spaces participate in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative.

Between now and September, child care providers are invited to apply for their preschool and school-aged programs in order to see savings begin September 1, 2023. As more providers apply, this [searchable list](#) of providers will be updated to reflect the child care centres working with government to lower child care fees for families.

- **Are the fee reductions available at facilities that run throughout the summer?**

Yes, fee reductions are available at participating licensed child care providers who operate during the summer months; however, these new fee reductions will not take effect for children in preschool and/or in school-age care programs (for Grade 1 and above) until September 1, 2023.

Please note, participating facilities offering these fee reductions must be licensed under the Child Care Licensing Regulation and providing care for an eligible care category. Certain programs, including summer camps, are exempt from licensing, and therefore may not be eligible. Additionally, some licensed child care categories are also ineligible, including Occasional Child Care (provided on an occasional or short-term basis) and Recreational Care (providing drop-in care after school or on non-instructional days).

Eligibility and Enrolment

- **Who is eligible for fee reductions?**

All parents paying child care fees for children 12 and under at participating child care facilities are eligible for the Child Care Fee Reduction starting September 2023. The reductions are not income tested and parents do not have to apply to receive the savings.

A [searchable list](#) of current providers working with government to lower child care fees for families is available on the ChildCareBC web page. You can also estimate your fee reduction amount using the [CCFRI estimator](#). Providers with participating preschool and school-aged programs will be added starting in the spring as their applications are processed and approved.

- **How do I enrol to receive fee reductions?**

Parents do not need to do anything to receive the benefit.

Contact your child care provider to find out if they plan to enrol in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. A [searchable list](#) of these providers is also available on the ChildCareBC website and will be updated when licensed preschool and school-age facilities are approved to enrol. You can also estimate your fee reduction amount using the [CCFRI estimator](#). Providers with participating preschool and school-aged programs will be added starting in the spring as their applications are processed and approved.

- **Do I need to be employed to receive the new fee reduction? Am I eligible to receive funding if I am not a Canadian citizen or B.C. resident?**

All families with children aged 12 and under enrolled at a participating child care facilities will benefit from the fee reductions beginning in September 2023. You do not need to be employed to receive these savings and there is no Canadian citizenship or B.C. residency requirement.

- **Do I have to fill out any forms to receive the new fee reduction?**

No, families do not need to submit any documentation to receive the new fee reduction. However, child care providers must be approved through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative each year in order for families to receive the savings. When providers are approved, they must pass the savings onto families right away.

Families in receipt of the Affordable Child Care Benefit may need to have their benefit plans updated. The process to do this will be shared prior to September 1, 2023.

- **I have an urgent need for child care. Does this automatically qualify me for a child care space?**

No. Your local [Child Care Resource and Referral Centre](#) can provide you with information and resources for finding child care based on your needs. You may also search for licensed child care facilities in your community using the [Child Care Map](#).

Additional funding supports may be available to you through the [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#).

The B.C. government is working to build more child care spaces in communities throughout the province. So far, over 30,500 new spaces have been funded, with more on the way.

- **I am considering unlicensed child care as an option. Are unlicensed child care providers able to participate in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative program?**

No. The reduced parent fees that have been announced are only applicable to participating, eligible licensed providers.

- **What if my provider won't apply to the program? What can parents do?**

We encourage all eligible providers to consider applying to the program.

Child care providers operate as independent businesses. Families can discuss the benefits of program participation with their providers.

In addition to funding to reduce fees, government is supporting participating providers through additional funding, which can be used to support their participation in the CCFRI and/or providing licensed child care. Since the launch of the CCFRI in April 2018, the vast majority (over 90%) of eligible facilities have been approved to enrol in the fee reductions.

A [searchable list](#) of these providers is also available on the ChildCareBC website and will be updated when licensed preschool and school-age facilities are approved to enrol.

Minimum Parent Fee

- **What is the minimum parent fee?**

The minimum parent fee is \$10 per day (\$200 per month) for full-day care or \$7 per day (\$140 per month) for part-day care. The minimum fee applies to child care facilities participating in the fee reduction, and is being introduced to align with the approach in place at \$10 a Day ChildCareBC sites.

Families eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit may pay less than \$200 per month, or even nothing at all, depending on their income and other eligibility factors.

A small number of child care facilities currently charging less than \$200 per month (after CCFRI) will be able to continue doing so – they will not be required to charge families more as a result of the minimum parent fee.

- **Why introduce a minimum fee? Isn't less than \$10 a Day better for parents?**

The Province's goal is to achieve \$10-a-day child care. The minimum parent fee ensures that the maximum possible benefit of this funding can be distributed as widely as possible throughout the province.

Depending on income and other eligibility factors, some families may also be eligible for additional funding through the [Affordable Child Care Benefit](#), which may result in paying less than \$200 per month.

- **I already pay less than the minimum parent fee. Will these enhancements mean I have to pay more due to the \$200 minimum parent fee?**

No. Families that currently pay under \$200 per month will not see their fees increase due to these changes.

A small number of providers working with government to lower child care fees for families currently charge less than \$200 per month and will continue to be supported in doing so. These providers will not be required to charge families more because of the minimum parent fee.

Fee Reductions

- **Life is expensive now. Why is the Province waiting until September to reduce child care fees?**

Since 2018, we have been helping families with the cost of child care and are now helping families with children kindergarten-age and under save up to \$900 per child per month. But we know families with older children need help too.

Announcing the changes now and implementing them in time for the September 2023 school year gives newly eligible and current participating providers the time they need to enrol and make administrative adjustments, so that the change is streamlined for parents.

- **Why aren't the fee reductions income tested or based on a sliding scale?**

The Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative is available to families accessing care at participating facilities, regardless of their household income and can be combined with other funding programs like the Affordable Child Care Benefit, which can provide additional savings based on a family's household income. Together, these two initiatives work to reduce fees for thousands of families throughout the province, including those that need it most.

- **What will the reduction be to my child care fees?**

Effective September 1, 2023, parents with children in preschool or in Grade 1 and above will save up to \$145 per child per month. This fee cut will put up to \$1,740 per child back into the pockets of families each year. The amount of savings each family receives will vary, depending on the age of their child, and the type of care being accessed.

For example, a dual-parent family with a household income of \$80,000 is accessing licensed preschool five days per week, with their provider charging \$460 a month.

- Effective September 1, 2023, if the facility is approved for the CCFRI, the family will be eligible to receive \$95 per month in fee reductions, bringing their monthly out-of-pocket child care fees to \$365.
- The family is also eligible to receive \$163 per month under the Affordable Child Care Benefit, further reducing their out-of-pocket expenses to \$202 per month.

The following table indicates the maximum monthly parent fee reduction, per child, for full-time enrolment (current and future).

Care Type	Care Category	Parent Fee Reduction
Group	Under 36 Months	\$900
	3 years to Kindergarten	\$545
	Kindergarten	\$320
	Grade 1 to Age 12	\$115
	Preschool	\$95
Family	Under 36 Months	\$600

	3 years to Kindergarten	\$500
	Kindergarten	\$320
	Grade 1 to Age 12	\$145

- **How can I determine exactly how much I can expect to save?**

A [CCFRI estimator](#) is available on the ChildCareBC website to help parents and providers estimate their new child care fees. Providers with participating preschool and school-aged programs will be added starting in the spring as their applications are processed and approved.

- **What happens if my provider raises their fees between now and September?**

The Ministry reviews all fee increase requests in accordance with the [CCFRI funding guidelines](#). As a condition of participating in the CCFRI, providers must agree to not increase parent fees without ministry approval first.

- **I access care at a group facility for my child who is in Grade 1 – why are my fee reduction amounts less than if I were at a family facility?**

On average, family facilities charge higher fees than Group facilities, for school-age child care. Scaling the funding (for parents and providers) based on these reported fees means that while the dollar amount of the fee reductions is higher for family care, on average, families will have similar out-of-pocket costs no matter which type of care they choose.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative and the Affordable Child Care Benefit

- **What is the Affordable Child Care Benefit?**

The Affordable Child Care Benefit is an income-tested monthly payment to help eligible families with the cost of child care. Factors like income, family size and type of care determine how much families can receive.

Families with household incomes of up to \$111,000 are eligible to receive the Affordable Child Care Benefit.

- **How do the new fee reductions and the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) interact?**

The fee reductions and the Affordable Child Care Benefit work together to lower the costs of child care fees for families and can be combined to add further savings for families who need it most. Families with a household income of up to \$111,000 may receive additional support through the ACCB.

All families with children enrolled in preschool or in Grade 1 and above will benefit from the reductions as of September 1, 2023, if their facility is approved for the CCFRI.

- **Will there be any changes to the Affordable Child Care Benefit now that child care will be more affordable?**

No, there will be no changes to the criteria for the Affordable Child Care Benefit.

- **Do I need to do anything to ensure my Affordable Child Care Benefit continues to be calculated correctly after this fee reduction?**

Families in receipt of the Affordable Child Care Benefit may need have their benefit plans updated. The process to do this will be shared prior to September 2023.

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative and \$10 a Day Child Care

Information about the \$10 a Day program is available on the [\\$10 a Day ChildCareBC web page](#).

- **How is the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative different from \$10 a Day?**

The primary difference between these two programs is how they're funded by government.

There are no differences in quality and licensing requirements between the two different funding types, and both programs can be combined with the Affordable Child Care Benefit to add further savings for families who need it most.

The \$10 a Day program and broad-based fee reductions for families are both part of our plan to make child care into a core service that every family can access and afford.

As the Province works to expand access to the \$10aDay program, facilities not yet able to join the \$10aDay program are able to enroll in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) to provide immediate relief to families. Both programs reduce fees, through enhanced operating funding to providers, regardless of a family's household income.

- **Are \$10 a Day ChildCareBC facilities eligible for even lower fees through the new fee reductions?**

No, our goal is to reduce child care to an average of \$10-a-day, per child. Families with children at \$10 a Day ChildCareBC facilities pay a maximum fee of \$10-a-day and can apply for the Affordable Child Care Benefit if they need further assistance with the cost of child care.

Similarly, families with children at a CCFRI facility will see their fees automatically reduced, and families that are also eligible for the Affordable Child Care Benefit may apply for additional support to further reduce their fees.

- **I have heard that the goal in British Columbia is for child care to cost no more than \$10 a day. Why is this not available for all families and when will it happen?**

Government is committed to making child care a core service that families can rely on at a cost that all families can afford.

British Columbia currently has over 10,700 \$10 a Day ChildCareBC spaces at more than 260 sites. Government will continue to support \$10 a Day ChildCareBC facilities, while at the same time reducing parent fees at facilities enrolled in the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative. The long-term goal of ChildCareBC is to provide child care as a core service at a cost of \$10 a day to families throughout the province.

- **What will happen to my space if my current Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative provider becomes a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Site?**

If your current child care provider converts to a \$10 a Day ChildCareBC Site, you will retain your space and you will start paying \$10 a day for child care.

Your provider will be able to give you information about the \$10 a Day ChildCareBC program if they transition to the program.

Contact Information and Staying Informed

- **Where can I find a list of providers working with government to lower child care fees for families through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative?**

A [searchable list](#) of participating providers is available on the ChildCareBC web site.

- **How can I stay up to date on child care initiatives in B.C.?**

The [ChildCareBC web page](#) has a variety of resources available and is updated regularly. We also encourage you to sign up for the [ChildCareBC Bulletin](#) to receive regular updates to your inbox.

- **After reviewing the frequently asked questions and the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative program web page, I still have questions. Who can I contact to answer my questions?**

Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative: For questions specific to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative program, please call 1 888 338-6622 (Option 2).

General: For general ChildCareBC inquiries, please contact ChildCareBC.Engagement@gov.bc.ca.