

What is your party's plan to make quality out of school care available to all families, in all communities?



Statistics cited from: 2021 Canadian Census & Alberta Ministry of Children Services 2023- Childcare Resource and Research Unit



Supporting an Integrated Approach to Childhood Development

- OOSC programs operating within schools, face inconsistent leasing terms and uncertainty about the availability of space from year to year across Alberta, because schools are over capacity. This forces many programs to operate within community center or retail spaces where high lease rates can make the program prohibitively expensive for some families.
- As of 2023 there were 55,484 OOSC spaces available in Alberta. At the same time, there were a total of 559,395 children enrolled in grades K-6, meaning that **no more than 9.92%** of Alberta's school age children could access a quality OOSC program.
- **Will your government work towards prioritizing available child care and community use spaces within schools (new builds and established sites) to create more spaces to service more families?**

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What is your party's plan to make out of school care affordable for all families?

1,336

LICENCED OOSC PROGRAMS IN ALBERTA

55,484

SPACES AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN K- GRADE 6

559,395 = 9.92%

SCHOOL AGED CHILDREN PRESENT IN ALBERTA

OF ALBERTA CHILDREN AGES 5-14 HAVE ACCESS TO OOSC PROGRAMS

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Supporting an Integrated Approach to Childhood Development

- The average OOSC fees in Alberta range between \$515.00 - \$710.00 per month, in addition to the cost of summer camp(s), which are typically even more expensive. For a single parent who makes Alberta's minimum wage of \$15.00/ hr, this constitutes approximately **24%** of their **gross wages**, **per child** at an average fee of \$624/month. Alberta's Living Wage for a single parent currently is \$28.93 in 2023
- Child care subsidy amounts have gone largely unchanged since the program's inception in 2008 and therefore have not kept up with the rate of inflation. One of the biggest challenges for families, is that subsidy is based on income tax data from the year previous, which does not always reflect the family's present financial situation, especially considering Alberta's current economic state.
- Subsidy amounts available to Albertan families currently work as a two tier system, creating barriers for some families to afford School Age care. Children 0-Kindergarten receive fee reductions up to \$450 and have up to \$266 available in subsidies if their family makes an annual income less than \$180, 000. Moving into OOSC (grades 1-6), only families making \$90,00 or less per year are eligible to access up to \$366 per month. This creates a "sticker shock" for families when moving up into OOSC programs and creates inequality in the funding for families.
- OOSC subsidy rates and benchmarks are unequal to those in other parts of the sector. **How will your government address this?**
- We recognize the Alberta Affordability Grant Funding is focused on children 0 -5, but this leaves a gap in funding for children ages 6 -12. **What will you party do to ensure there is equality in funding towards supporting children, families and OOSC programs (grades 1 - 6)?**
- Increased summer time subsidy funding is often needed for families attending programs when their traditional care is closed or prices increase over the 2 month period. **Will your party commit to increased subsidy funding for families who need care in the summer months?**



How does your party plan to increase the frequency of cross-ministerial conversations and initiatives, as they pertain to out of school care?

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Supporting an Integrated Approach to Childhood Development

- OOSC programs are responsible to several branches of Provincial and Municipal government, whose requirements are sometimes at odds with one another. For example, programs are expected to incorporate natural materials into the environment, but Alberta Health Services discourages this practice.
- Throughout the province there are inconsistent requirements for development permits when operating inside of schools based on geographic location.
- There is a great deal of unrealized potential for collaboration between the Ministry of Children's Services and the Ministry of Education, among others. Likewise, opportunities exist for collaboration and continuity of care between OOSC providers, and the schools in which they most frequently operate.

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How does your party plan to increase support to Child Care Operators while rebuilding the Early Childhood Care System?

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Supporting Child Care Operators

- The government has committed to increase the number of childcare spaces in Alberta. **What is your party's plan to support programs as they open new spaces?** Qualified staff, space creation grants, etc.
- **How will your party support programs to train, retain and support qualified educators and those in leadership / management roles?**
- Not For Profit & Private Organizations – **Will your party treat both types of childcare organizations equally, and will the expansion of private organizations be available now that the Cost Control Framework is in place?**
- Under the current funding models, those in some administrative / support / leadership roles who don't work in ratio cannot currently access Wage Top-Up or Professional Development funding, Those leadership and support staff provide critical support in ensuring the quality of their programs, however, because some don't qualify for extra funding, our sector is concerned it will result in an exodus of highly skilled individuals from our sector due to the lack of growth opportunities. **What is your party's plan to address this issue and maintain growth within the sector?**
- Additional supports are needed at the ministry level to properly maintain newly built systems, and to reduce wait times for subsidy, funding, and grant approvals. **What is your party's plan to bolster the ministries capabilities and shorten wait times?**
- Operators have been burdened with expensive and time-consuming administrative tasks when distributing and managing new government funding and initiatives. **What will your party do to financially support and reduce the administrative burden and the “red tape” associated with the changes to funding so that programs can focus again on what's important... the children?**
- Many operators in the Child Care Sector feel that they have not been effectively consulted and want to be part of the decision making process when it comes to rebuilding the child care system. **Will your party commit to engaging meaningfully with the sector to help guide decision making?**



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How does your party plan to address the gaps in supporting families and programs with children with exceptionalities?

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Supporting Exceptionalities in Early Childhood Development

- Prior to September 2022, Supported Child Care (SCC), provided funding so childcare programs had the resources to hire educators that would be dedicated to work one-on-one with children who needed that extra support.
- Now, when children with exceptionalities start in our programs, they must have a Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD) contract in place, or else they are not able to receive support.
- Nine (9) months is the current wait time to get approved for FSCD. To assist with this gap, there is the Inclusive Childcare Program (ICC) which is meant to last three (3) months. This leaves us with at minimum a six (6) month gap where children are unsupported. Hiring educators to support for only 3 months of funding is challenging.
- **How is your party going to ensure that all children and their families receive equal access to quality Early Learning and Child Care experiences?**
- **How will your party ensure there are relevant and consistent approved PD opportunities available for educators to address exceptional needs in their programs?**
- **What is you plan to support current services, families of children with exceptionalities, and availability of resourses?**

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