

May 1, 2007

## **New initiatives target more staff and the creation of child care spaces**

### **Ensuring parents have access to affordable child care options**

Edmonton... The Alberta government is investing close to \$16 million towards creating more child care spaces, attracting and retaining qualified staff and making child care more affordable for low and middle-income parents who want to work or go to school. This additional funding boost brings total child care funding to \$134 million this year.

"We're building on Alberta's Five-Point Child Care Investment Plan because we know it's working," said Janis Tarchuk, Minister of Children's Services. "With more and more families moving to Alberta and needing child care, this new funding will create an environment that will motivate individuals to choose child care as their profession and promote the creation of more child care spaces."

The Alberta government will invest:

- \$5.6 million to improve subsidies for parents and to help child care programs cover the cost of processing subsidies. This includes a 5.6 per cent increase in child care subsidy for eligible families across the province. This funding will also support the new subsidy transaction fee, paid directly to operators.
- \$2 million towards a new Space Creation Innovation Fund that will help cover the start-up costs of creating more child care spaces across the province.
- \$400,000 to establish a staff attraction incentive to encourage people to re-enter the child care workforce and to create a marketing campaign that will promote child care as a profession of choice.

This increase includes \$7 million previously announced to fund a 40 per cent increase to staff wage top-ups, and \$1 million to relieve child care pressures in Fort McMurray. It also complements the \$1.5 million invested to fund the new Children's Services Child Care Bursary designed to off-set the costs of formal education for leaders and aspiring leaders working in child care. Children's Services will continue to work directly with the out-of-school care sector and other provincial stakeholders to identify workable options that will make it easier for parents to find child care for their school-age children.

Improving access to quality child care is one of the key actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to manage growth pressures and improve Albertans' quality of life. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, build a strong Alberta and provide safe and secure communities.

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Backgrounder: details of increased investment are attached.

### **Media enquiries may be directed to:**

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To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

## Backgrounder

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### New 2007-08 funding helps manage the growing need for child care

Edmonton... Budget 2007 helps ensure families have more access to affordable, quality child care.

Effective June 1, the Alberta government will enhance the Five-Point Child Care Investment Plan by offering:

- A staff attraction incentive of up to \$5,000 for trained child care staff who have left the profession and agree to return to the child care sector, for at least two years. This will be initiated together with a marketing campaign that will promote child care as a career choice.
- Eligible low and middle-income parents will receive a 5.6 per cent increase in subsidy.

Provincial child care subsidy rate changes		
	Current maximum rate per child	New maximum rate per child as of June 1
Day Care	\$500-575/month	\$528-607/month
Family Day Home	\$400-475/month	\$422-502/month
Kin Child Care	\$300/month	\$317/month

- Child care operators, who have subsidized parents enrolled in their program, will receive \$12 each month to cover the costs related to administering subsidy on behalf of eligible families.

On July 1, Children's Services will begin accepting Space Creation Innovation Fund proposals for one-time start up grants, of up to \$1,500 for each new child care space, from people interested in starting up new child care programs or expanding existing spaces. Funding received under this program can be used for equipment and supplies, renovations or to assist with the planning related to starting a new program. It is estimated that it costs between \$5,000 - \$10,000 to create a new child care space, depending on whether the facility is being built, leased or purchased.

Alberta's Five-Point Child Care Investment Plan is based on parental choice and flexibility and is helping to ensure parents, who have children six years and younger, have access to quality, affordable child care that meets the needs of their children. Since it was introduced in October 2005:

- 30 per cent more families are accessing child care subsidies and the Kin Child Care Funding program is offering parents more choices, especially in rural areas;
- staff wage top-ups have increased by 40 per cent and staff continue to receive annual professional development grants to help pay for education and training programs; and
- 168 programs have been accredited, with another 353 working towards the same goal.

Alberta has 45 Parent Link Centres and a new one has just been approved. Families can also obtain helpful

information by contacting the Parent Information Line 1-866-714-KIDS (5437).

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