

2020 Budget

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Alberta 2020-2021 Budget

Alberta's 2020-2021 Budget was released yesterday and it does look like there will be some changes coming to child care.

The most notable change was an overall reduction in the child care budget by \$29 million.

Children's Services has set out the following key objectives in their budget:

1. Improving access to child care by supporting initiatives that encourage affordability and quality in the child care system;
2. Creating digital opportunities for families to access information and benefits related to child care more early and efficiently;
3. Enhancing and promoting diversity in licensed and approved child care services, including supports that are culturally inclusive and for children with unique needs; and
4. Reviewing the Child Care Licensing Act with the intent of reducing red tape, supporting choice for parents, and maintaining focus on the safety and well being of children.

The child care budget has been allocated as follows:

1. \$180 million is allocated to Child Care Subsidy to provide subsidies to low income families with children who need licensed or approved child care services.

- This is an increase of \$4 million from the 2019-2020 budget.
2. \$123 million is allocated to providing funding for the certification of child care staff based on educational qualifications; supporting the recruitment and retention of qualified and educated staff through professional development and tiered wage top ups; and the licensing, support and monitoring of child care programs under the Child Care Licensing Act;
 - This is a reduction of \$18 million from the 2019-2020 budget. The present budget eliminates a key funding component listed in the 2019-2020 budget which is funding for accreditation itself, and revises the funding to be specifically allocated to "professional development and tiered wage top ups."
 3. \$10 million is allocated to providing specialized child care funding and support to families and licensed child care programs so that children with unique needs have access to quality child care environments that meet their needs.
 - Funding has not changed at all in this regard.

We met with a member of the Children's Services ministry yesterday and were advised that the overall reduction of \$29 million from the child care budget is largely coming from the elimination of the accreditation department. We have been advised that there will be announcements coming mid-March from the Ministry in this regard.

The budget has reaffirmed the government's commitment to continue providing professional development funding tiered wage top ups for staff. Minister Schulz further supported that commitment on her Twitter page.

At this time, we do not know whether Accreditation itself has been eliminated, or simply the agency overlooking Accreditation, so if you are in the process of re-accreditation, please continue doing your work until you hear further. We hope to receive further clarification from Children's Services in the upcoming days and will update you in due course.

We have also been told that there will be MLA led consultations from April 9 – 24 regarding red tape reduction and the Child Care Licensing Act review.

As mentioned in our last meeting, please expect a series of surveys from AACCO so that we can find out what you as members want and can present this to the government. This will be a good opportunity to share our thoughts with the government and be part of the upcoming changes.

Membership Renewal

A reminder that all of the work that AACCO does is voluntary and relies on membership! Renewal reminders will be e-mail next week. If your membership has expired, please make sure to renew it as soon as possible so that we can continue our work and give operators a chance to shape the future of Alberta's child care system.

To renew your membership, please e-mail us aacco.ab@gmail.com.

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