



ALBERTA
CHILDREN'S SERVICES

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary-Shaw*

Cathy Heron
president@abmunis.ab

Dear Cathy Heron:

Thank you for your email on behalf of the members of Alberta Municipalities regarding Resolution 2021.C1 Advocacy for a National Early Learning and Care Program.

Our government agrees that access to affordable, quality child care is essential for the economy, now more than ever. We also recognize that municipalities will play a large role in ensuring and overseeing high-quality child care tailored to meet community needs, and we look forward to working with you.

It has been my pleasure to share with Albertans the signing of the historic Canada-Alberta Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Program in November 2021. This agreement will provide \$3.8 billion over five years towards a made-in-Alberta plan to reduce fees and increase the number of licensed spaces to help families access the child care they need to go to work or school, and continue building our economy. Although this agreement was announced only recently, we are working very hard to roll out the key components starting this year.

Child care has always helped keep families healthy and strong, but this pandemic has really highlighted how essential child care is for economic recovery and growth in your communities. I have heard from many municipal leaders who are interested in affordable, accessible, high-quality child care as a crucial service that makes their communities more socially and economically attractive.

Under this new agreement, over the next five years, we will add at least 42,500 new licensed child care spaces in daycare and preschool programs and family day homes, targeting areas of the province where working parents have limited or no options when it comes to child care, especially in rural Alberta.

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As we move forward to achieve this goal, we will be working with provincial partners, community-based stakeholders, and municipalities to encourage and support the creation of new child care spaces. Municipalities and municipal associations have valuable insight and local knowledge about what residents need from their child care system, and we are happy to work with municipalities to ensure their municipal land use and zoning bylaws support the creation of affordable, quality child care spaces. My ministry is working with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to identify ways to work with municipalities to support our space creation goals, and I look forward to opportunities to connect with municipalities as we engage on this exciting initiative beginning this spring.

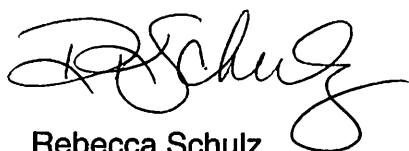
Our new agreement also reflects feedback from Albertans about the importance of meeting the unique needs of Alberta families. This includes enhanced investments into inclusive programming to enable programs to better support kids with diverse needs, as well as support families through cultural and language programming options.

We also know high-quality child care starts with qualified staff, and this agreement includes over \$300 million for operators to hire more educators and help support their development and training. Our educators will continue to receive some of the highest wages in Canada in recognition of the great work they do to support children and families.

I am incredibly optimistic about the future of child care in this province and look forward to sharing more information over the coming weeks and months as details are finalized. In the meantime, our website at www.alberta.ca/childcaredeal will be updated as information is available.

Thank you again for your support for affordable, quality early learning and child care.

Sincerely,



Rebecca Schulz
Minister of Children's Services