



## **2024 BC Election Platform Analysis: Where do the parties stand on \$10aDay Child Care?**

In 2018 the BC NDP government started building a system of quality, affordable, universal child care based on our widely-supported [\\$10aDay Plan](#), which we first released and recommended to the BC Liberal government in 2011.

The federal government followed in 2021 with funding to achieve \$10aDay child care across Canada, along with the goals set out in the [Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework](#).

To date, these commitments have [led to](#) the creation of 40,000 new licensed child care spaces operating in BC, along with \$6/hour wage enhancements for early childhood educators, parent fee reductions of up to \$900/month in 134,000 spaces, and the creation of over 15,000 \$10aDay spaces.

Child care in BC is now more affordable, more accessible and better supported than it has ever been, but [much more work is required](#) to ensure every BC family can access \$10aDay child care and early childhood educators are fairly compensated.

A [March 2024 poll](#) confirmed that nearly 80% of British Columbians agree it's important for government to continue with its \$10aDay commitments and three quarters (76%) think implementation should be moving more quickly. Recognizing the success of \$10aDay to date, all 3 major parties have centered their child care election promises around \$10aDay to varying degrees.

Our analysis of the 2024 BC Election Platforms assesses the extent to which they commit to specific action in 4 key areas – increase educator compensation, accelerate the transition of existing spaces to \$10aDay, provide school-age child care in every school, increase capital funding for new facilities – all in alignment with the Canada-wide funding agreements signed with provinces and territories.

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### **BC Green Party**

The [BC Green Party](#) has supported the child care progress to date in BC, as their commitment to child care has evolved. Their platform now clearly addresses all 4 of our key priorities and is aligned with existing federal/provincial funding agreements.

Specifically, their 2024 election platform commits to:

- Early Childhood Educator compensation, achieving the recommended \$30-\$40/hour wage grid by 2026, along with pension plans and health benefits, paid final practicums, and loan forgiveness programs for post-secondary education.
- Ensuring BC “remains on track to deliver \$10/day childcare for all, making early childhood education affordable for all families.”
- Ensuring “all families have access to before- and after-school care” including expansion of “dedicated school-age spaces across BC schools” and “flexible childcare solutions for families.”
- Allocating “at least \$250 million to expand childcare space creation for children and infants under 5” and “\$100 million ... to create a capital program ... for renovations and additions to schools to support ECE space creation.”

### BC Green Party Platform Summary

The Green Party Platform is strongly aligned with BC’s existing commitments and our advocacy priorities including commitments to an educator wage grid, transitioning programs to achieve \$10aDay for all, accessible and affordable before and after school care for all, and a capital program and budget of \$350 million. We call on the Greens to advocate boldly for prompt implementation of their commitments, including acceleration of the educator wage grid implementation.

### BC NDP

The [BC NDP](#) was the first government to commit to \$10aDay Child Care and the first province to sign an agreement with the federal government to expand this system.

Their 2024 election platform:

- Confirms current expansion commitments of the \$10aDay child care model over the coming years, but does not explicitly commit to the rapid transition of existing spaces to \$10aDay that BC families want and need.
- Commits to 2 of our 4 system building priorities:
  1. More affordable before and after school care in every BC school district, which is a solid step in the right direction, but not yet a commitment to sufficient school-age child care in every school.
  2. \$500 million capital funding for facilities, with a long-term capital plan to add ‘tens of thousands’ of much needed, new accessible, affordable child care spaces.
- Is disappointingly silent on the implementation of a long-promised wage grid for early childhood educators, even though testing is now underway in a small number of \$10aDay programs. The only way to ensure enough qualified educators are available to staff these new and existing programs is to implement a provincial wage grid for Early Childhood Educators with a starting wage of [at least \\$30-\\$40/hour along with comprehensive benefits and supportive working conditions](#).

## BC NDP Platform Summary

The NDP Platform continues to be aligned with existing federal/provincial funding commitments and addresses some key advocacy priorities. It promises more affordable before and after school care and commits to a child care capital plan and \$500 million budget to build new facilities, adding much-needed spaces to the system. Its main weaknesses are the lack of commitments to an educator wage grid and rapid transition of existing child care to \$10aDay. We call on the NDP for bolder and more decisive action on these priorities.

## Conservative Party of BC

The [BC Conservatives](#) clearly acknowledge the popularity of \$10aDay child care and its importance to BC families. However, their child care election promise is not backed up with a budget and is grounded in a significant misunderstanding of BC's child care sector.

The Conservatives prioritize support for "independent childcare providers" which they claim are mostly "woman-led small businesses" who receive "vastly diminished support compared to centralized, government-run facilities."

In fact, the provincial government does not directly operate child care programs. Child care operating funding is equitably available to programs operated by school districts, municipalities and a range of organizations that provide most of the child care in BC: non-profit societies, Indigenous organizations, and for-profit businesses (including sole proprietors, franchises, national and international corporate chains, private equity firms, and anonymous numbered companies).

The Conservatives' promise to [include current for-profit providers in the \\$10aDay system](#) is consistent with our call for rapid expansion of \$10aDay programs through adequate public funding and strong accountability measures. Yet, several of their 2024 election promises - or omissions - raise important questions and concerns:

- Will the Conservatives' concern about for-profit businesses being "stripped of access to the start-up and renovation funding" lead them to offer non-repayable public funds for businesses to acquire privately-owned child care real estate (an expensive and risky approach, compared to expanding spaces in public- and community-owned facilities)?
- Their stated expansion strategy relies on fixing/removing regulations, which has the potential to undermine health, safety and quality standards for children and working conditions for educators.
- They say "kids" who have the "fewest alternatives" will get \$10aDay spaces with no clarity on how that would be determined or managed.
- They will only support schools that 'want to offer child care programs' rather than provide a mandate for before and after school care in every school.
- And, they are silent on improved wages for early childhood educators, which undermines their expansion strategy.

## Conservative Party of BC Platform Summary

While the Conservatives promise more \$10aDay child care, their commitment is only backed up with a budget of \$37 million over 2 years and is based on misunderstandings about child care in BC. They are silent on an educator wage grid, and their intention to expand spaces by eliminating 'red tape' could undermine quality. We are concerned that their proposals may take us back to BC's failed market-based approach rather than continue to move us forward to a quality, universal \$10aDay system. We call on the Conservatives to base their child care policy on decades of well-established research and the lived expertise of BC families and educators.