

# Alberta Meets Childcare Space Targets, But Families Still Struggle to Access Affordable Care

*ACE calls for future childcare funding to follow children and families, not designated spaces*

CALGARY, AB, CANADA, June 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE) is calling on federal and provincial governments to modernize the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) funding model after Alberta became the first province to effectively reach its childcare space creation targets under the agreement.



**A Canadian Coalition Of  
Childcare Operators**

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ACE says the milestone has revealed a gap in how the current model works in practice. Affordability funding is attached to a limited number of designated childcare spaces, meaning families may be unable to access reduced fees simply because the licensed program available to them is not part of the funded allocation. Alberta also has thousands of additional licensed childcare spaces either operating or under development that are not eligible for affordability funding under the current agreement.

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The next phase of childcare policy should focus not only on creating spaces, but on ensuring affordability funding reaches families wherever licensed childcare is available.”

*Krystal Churcher, Board Chair  
of ACE*

The June 4 announcement regarding non-profit affordability funding eligibility means that many new licensed childcare programs will be unable to participate in the Affordability Grant program going forward.

"Families were promised affordable and accessible childcare," said Krystal Churcher, Board Chair of ACE. "A family should not lose access to affordability funding simply because the licensed childcare space available to them is not one of the designated funded spaces, and a licensed

space that exists in a community should be available to the families in that community."

ACE is calling on governments to use upcoming CWELCC renewal discussions to explore a model where affordability funding follows the child to any licensed childcare program, rather than being tied to a fixed number of designated spaces. That would improve access for families, reduce barriers created by space allocation limits, support family choice, and better direct public funding to the families it is meant to reach.

With the current Canada-Alberta childcare agreement set to expire on March 31, 2027, ACE is also calling for greater transparency around funded-space utilization, enrollment trends, and vacancy rates to inform future policy decisions.

"Alberta has given governments across Canada an opportunity to learn from what happens when a province successfully reaches its expansion targets," said Churcher. "The next phase of childcare policy should focus not only on creating spaces, but on ensuring affordability funding reaches families wherever licensed childcare is available."

About ACE:

The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE) is a national coalition representing licensed childcare providers across Canada, including home-based programs, non-profit centres, and private operators. ACE advocates for a childcare system that is sustainable, accessible, and equitable for families and operators of all types.

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