

NEWS RELEASE

Quebec's subsidized daycare imposes real costs on taxpayers, limits choice for parents

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For immediate release

VANCOUVER—Quebec's subsidized daycare program has produced skyrocketing costs along with worrying child development outcomes without eliminating wait times, finds a new study released today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

The findings are especially important, given the federal government announced in the 2017 budget last week that it wants to create 40,000 subsidized daycare spots across Canada over the next three years.

"Policymakers across Canada have eyed Quebec's subsidized daycare program as a potential model to follow, but some of the claims made to support it—that it pays for itself, eliminates wait lists and consistently benefits children—aren't supported by the evidence," said Ben Eisen, director of provincial prosperity studies at the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Quebec's Daycare Program: A Flawed Policy Model*.

The study finds that in 2014/15, the provincial government spent \$2.6 billion for the program. More specifically, spending on a per-child basis—after adjusting for inflation—jumped 101.6 per cent since the program's creation, from \$4,874 in 1997 to \$9,823 in 2016 (amounts in 2016 dollars).

What's more, fully 10 years after the program was introduced, tens of thousands of children remained on wait lists for spots, which are rationed by the government because of rising costs.

While research shows high quality daycare programs can produce long-lasting beneficial cognitive and social development outcomes for some children, the study also documents compelling evidence that Quebec's subsidized daycare program has contributed to negative effects on the social and health development of some children enrolled.

For example, Quebec's daycare program has been found to lead to increased aggression, anxiety, and hyperactivity in boys since the daycare program was introduced.

"While daycare centres work well for some children, it's not the best option for every child," Eisen said.

"Programs that provide resources directly to families to help them cover the costs of whatever approach to childcare works best for them—including daycare, but also parental care or private home-based care—is a strategy that can help a much broader range of families."


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MEDIA CONTACT:

Ben Eisen, Director, Provincial Prosperity Studies
Fraser Institute

To arrange media interviews or for more information, please contact:

Bryn Weese, Media Relations Specialist
Fraser Institute
Tel: (604) 688-0221 Ext. 589
E-mail: bryn.weese@fraserinstitute.org



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