

# 5 Things Friday



What your government did for you this week.

## **Child Care in Ontario**

Ontario is investing \$1.6 billion to build 45,000 new licensed child care spaces in schools in 2017, and expanding to other public spaces and communities across Ontario over the next five years. This week, the province released its Renewed Early Years and Child Care Policy Framework and Expansion Plan. The framework, will act as a blueprint for expanding childcare in Ontario over the next five years. As part of the framework, the province will launch an expert-led Affordability Strategy which will help identify options to further reduce child care costs, and review the current funding approach. The framework also outlines a seven-point plan for how the province will transform its early years and child care strategy to support Ontario's early years and child care professionals.



## **Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM)**

Starting in September, more than 50,000 students will be enrolled in almost 1,900 Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) programs that allow them to focus on a career path that matches their skills and interests, while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students can choose between 19 different sectors, including environment, health and wellness, and transportation.

## **Ontario Autism Program**

The province is transforming the way that children and youth with autism, and their families, receive services and supports through the new Ontario Autism Program (OAP), beginning later this month. The new OAP will ensure autism services for children and youth are delivered consistently across the province. On June 26, families will be transitioning into the new OAP. The new OAP will be fully in place by spring 2018. To learn more visit: <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/autism/ontario-autism-program.aspx>

## **Ontario Open Textbooks Initiatives**

Ontario is investing in free online textbooks and educational resources for students to make colleges and university more affordable. Ontario is partnering with eCampusOntario to develop and provide free and low-cost digital textbooks to students. The Ontario Open Textbooks Initiatives will focus on Ontario-specific content in areas where the most significant impact and cost savings for students can be realized including high-enrolment first-year courses, French language content, content for Indigenous studies, trades and technical skills content, and content for new Canadians. New materials developed for Ontario will be added to the eCampusOntario online library of free educational resources which launched this week.



## **Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities**

Ontario is taking action to break down employment barriers for people with disabilities by launching a new strategy to connect more people with disabilities to rewarding jobs and more employers to new talent.

Access Talent: Ontario's Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities will:

- Support the development of students and young people with the launch of a new pilot project through the Ontario Disability Support Program to provide individualized and coordinated services and supports.
- Engage employers as partners and champions through an online platform that will connect businesses, people with disabilities, and the public to share advice and lessons learned.

To learn more, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/access-talent-ontarios-employment-strategy-people-disabilities>