

Parents, early-childhood educators offer province suggestions to improve daycare ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The rising cost of daycare was the main concern at a provincial town hall at Ottawa's Shaw Centre Monday evening.

Parents raised concerns about the increasing cost of sending their children to daycare, while early-childhood educators expressed worry about having enough money to hire sufficient staff to keep more daycare spaces open.

Ontario's Ministry of Education is preparing to draft new guidelines — including programming requirements for how both licensed and unlicensed daycare centres operate — but first officials want to hear from residents.

More than 100 people turned out to share their experiences and offer suggestions on how to improve daycare in Ontario.

Costs for parents, compensation for providers

Christie Saikaly, a mother of two young children, said affordability is a common worry.

"At the top of every parent's list is probably cost," she said.

She added that she doesn't want costs to be cut at the expense of quality, so she also wants to see strong regulations.

"So that means educators who are educated, can provide quality care to my children, who know what they need, can provide the comfort and teach the resiliency skills and all those good things that the kids will need in the future," Saikaly said.

Other parents said they were having difficulty finding daycare spaces and welcome the Ontario government's commitment to add 100,000 daycare spaces for children up to the age of four across Ontario over the next five years.

'Parents paying far too much'

Donna Mortimer has worked in the daycare field for almost a quarter of a century. She wants both the provincial and federal governments to work together to fund a national childcare program.

"I think it's outrageous that our pay is dependent on parents paying far too much for child care," she said.

"It's a crazy situation. I don't see how anyone can afford childcare and if we don't pay staff properly, they won't stay."

Indira Naidoo-Harris, the Ontario minister responsible for early years and child care, said the new regulations are meant to address concerns she's heard not only in Ottawa but more than a dozen other communities she's visiting this month.

"Part of these consultations are about affordability, accessibility, quality and, of course, responsiveness. So how do we go about creating a system that really meets the diverse needs of communities and families across the province? And absolutely, affordability is a key part of that," Naidoo-Harris said.

She hopes to have the guidelines in place by the end of February.

-reprinted from CBC News

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: quality ^[4]

cost ^[5]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/01/parents-early-childhood-educators-offer-province-suggestions-improve> [2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/daycare-province-ece-kindergarten-1.3938434> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/cost>