

Parents urge Toronto city council not to slash child care grants ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Parents in Toronto are urging city councillors this week to vote against a proposal to phase out occupancy grants for schools that house daycares.

A group of parents and educators held a rally inside city hall Wednesday morning to call on councillors to “have a heart” and protect child care in schools.

“Many of these families will not be able to afford the fee increases from the grants elimination,” parent Jessica Diamond told reporters at city hall.

The cut to occupancy grants, which help cover rent in 350 on-site daycare centres at local schools, would force parents of 4,200 children to pay over \$350 more in child care fees each year, the group said.

They also added that financial pressure on child care centres could also destabilize programs that provide vital services to Toronto families.

The proposed phasing out of the grants, if approved, would come into effect in July. However, it would not impact low-income parents receiving subsidies.

The city says the cut would free up \$1.13 million in 2017 and \$1.13 million in 2018.

Earlier this month, Mayor John Tory announced the city would invest \$3 million to create 300 new child care subsidies.

“These additional subsidies are badly needed. But funding the new subsidies by using occupancy grant money means 300 families get off the wait list, while the struggle just gets harder of the 18,000 families that are still waiting,” Diamond said.

The city currently provides child care subsidies to 26,359 families, but there are more than 17,000 children’s families currently on a waiting list.

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