

Ontario sets forth vision for childcare ^[1]

Author: Mark Brown

Source: Inside Halton

Format: Article

Publication Date: 25 Jan 2017

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The province of Ontario's long term vision for child care is being discussed in open forums.

One of those forums took place in Windsor Tuesday night. Child care providers, social workers, agency heads and parents gathered at historic Mackenzie Hall in Sandwich Towne to hear about the Ministry of Education's plan to improve childcare accessibility across the province. Representatives from the ministry held group discussions to gather input on the advantages and challenges that are faced in child care.

Indira Naidoo-Harris, associate minister of education, oversees programs being brought forth by passage in 2015 of the Child Care and Early Years Act of 2014, under the current Liberal government of Premier Kathleen Wynne. She said the forum is the best to find out what Ontarians are feeling about the subject.

"We're transforming the way we're doing child care and Early Years programs," said Naidoo-Harris. "We want to find out from parents and care providers and experts and the general public what they feel they'd like to see us do when it comes to transforming and delivering childcare."

The Windsor event is one of many scheduled across Ontario on what Naidoo-Harris called a "consultation tour". Some of the consultations featured public forums such as the one held in Windsor, but others featured meetings with stakeholders and tours of Early Years facilities.

"This is the 14th community we're visiting when we're here in Windsor and it's been a fantastic visit," said Naidoo-Harris. "It's been really great talking to Windsor residents about what's on their minds when it comes to childcare in Ontario."

One of the things she noticed was how different needs were brought up depending on where in the province the consultation was being held. Windsor's reputation as a blue-collar factory city comes into play.

"We're hearing a lot about workers who are doing shift work and trying to find that care that doesn't necessarily fit into that day when the school bell rings," said Naidoo-Harris. "People are often needing care earlier in the day and later in the day, and sometimes even later in the evening. And so, they've voiced that need for that kind of support."

Other portions of the province have different primary needs. Northern Ontario, for example, specifically in the area dubbed "cottage country", seasonal work is the key factor.

There are four pillars in Ontario's childcare strategy that the ministry is seeking input on. The first is access, which involves increasing childcare spaces as well as letting parents know about how Early Years Centres can help. Responsiveness involves the current system being able to provide parents with what they need. Affordability is a key issue for parents when childcare needs arise, as is the fourth and final touchstone, quality.

Naidoo-Harris said transportation is one subject that has tied into these touchstones, particularly in larger cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, London, and certainly Windsor.

"People talk about difficulties moving around the city if they don't have a car," said Naidoo-Harris. "So, what kind of challenges does that present to parents who have to drop their kids off at a childcare centre and then go off to work?"

According to the Ministry of Education, the province has made inroads in increasing access to childcare across Ontario. With currently 390,000 spaces, the province is looking to add 100,000 more over the next five years. Other innovations include full-day kindergarten, a complete overhaul of childcare legislation, and working closer with partners in the Metis, Inuit and First Nations communities. The province estimates that almost half of all children in Ontario between birth and four years of age need some form of licensed care.

The complete provincial plan for childcare in Ontario is available online at www.ontario.ca/morechildcare ^[3].

Reprinted from: Inside Halton

Region: Ontario ^[4]

Tags: legislation and regulatioin ^[5]

child care ^[6]

flexi-work ^[7]

community consultation ^[8]

open forum ^[9]

Naidoo-Harris ^[10]

childcare legislation ^[11]

licensed ^[12]

unlicensed ^[13]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/02/ontario-sets-forth-vision-childcare>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/02/ontario-sets-forth-vision-childcare> [2] <https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/7084498-ontario-sets-forth-vision-for-childcare/> [3] <http://www.ontario.ca/morechildcare> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulatioin> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/flexi-work> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/community-consultation> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/open-forum> [10] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/naidoo-harris> [11] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/childcare-legislation> [12] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/licensed> [13] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/unlicensed>