

Daycare spaces still a struggle in Regina ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Looking for child care is a struggle for many Regina parents that starts before the baby is even born.

"They should get on the wait list as soon as they're comfortable telling people that they're expecting," Randi Bodas, YMCA child care operations senior director, said.

Parents also need to check in every six months in order to make sure they stay on the list, she added.

"Our waitlists are anywhere from three to five years, but that can go down depending on the age," Bodas said.

Other daycare centres also find parents are frustrated with what are often multiple-year wait lists.

"A lot of times parents are calling three to four months before they're going back to work and I have to tell them that I'm probably not going to be able to get their child in until they're at least 18 months," Tara Jors, First Years Learning Centre executive director, said.

"It creates panic. Parents aren't sure what they should be doing with their children for them to be able to go back to work, especially if they're on huge waitlists," Jors said.

"They're having to call family members or find friends that have day homes to put their children there until they can get into a licensed centre."

An extra 810 child care spaces will be available when nine joint use schools open in September, including 270 spaces in Regina.

Bodas said these spaces are much needed and should help ease the burden on the system.

"Given the financial struggles of the government that's been coming out these days, I think the fact that they've committed to making these spaces available is great, and we're definitely moving in the right direction. It's put a dent in it for sure," she said.

There's always a high demand for infant spaces, but the new daycare spots could have a negative impact on licensed child care homes, according to Bev Leung, Saskatchewan Association of Child Care Homes co-chairperson.

"I think it actually will be harder for us as daycare homes to operate. I think because it shows the demand will not be there, more people will choose to take their children to a centre," she said.

At the end of 2016, there were 4,018 licensed child care spaces in Regina, up 568 from five years ago. Saskatoon had a total of 3,218 spaces, up 773 from five years ago.

The total number of daycare spaces in the province at the end of last year was 15,057. Just over 2,000 of these spaces are in licensed family child care homes and the rest are in child care centres.

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/03/daycare-spaces-still-struggle-regina> [2] <https://globalnews.ca/news/3315828/day-care-spaces-still-a-struggle-in-regina/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7858> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessiblity> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/space-shortage> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/provincial-budget>