

# Nova Scotia pre-primary program gets mixed response <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Walsh, Marieke

**Source:** Global News

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 19 Jul 2017

## AVAILABILITY

Read/listen/watch online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

Hundreds of Nova Scotians have already signed up for the province's pre-primary program but others are skeptical about the government's plans.

On Wednesday afternoon Premier Stephen McNeil took to social media to announce 440 people had already pre-registered their child for the program — launched a day earlier.

"So far, 440 (Nova Scotians) have pre-registered their child for pre-primary – saving their family thousands & giving their child a better start," the post read.

But other parents say they're skeptical about the program. Nikki Jamieson's son will be eligible for it next year, but she told Global News she's concerned on several fronts. In particular she concerned about the looser staffing ratios for the government program when compared to the private and not-for profit programs available for the same age group.

And she said the hours will make it inaccessible for working parents and parents who are students.

"None of these people are actually going to be able to use this program with it being from 9 a.m. to about 2:45 in the afternoon," she said. "I don't think its good enough."

She said she would rather the government put the money into existing programs run through child care centres and lower costs for families. But on Tuesday, Education Minister Zach Churchill said only 25 per cent of kids are accessing early childhood education through current programs.

Jamieson gathered comments from parents concerned about the program on the Facebook group Teachers and Parents of Nova Scotia.

Worries about an already "overburdened" education system, the lack of school bus transportation for pre-primary kids and the lower staffing ratios were among the issues discussed by parents.

"I was excited to put my daughter into the program, but the excitement quickly turned into disappointment," said one parent.

Churchill told reporters at the announcement that the staffing ratios are in keeping with other jurisdictions who have similar programs.

"This number is based on a national norm for pre-primary programming that's available in schools," he said. "Health and safety and quality are our top concern."

Come September, the pre-primary programs in public schools will have ratio of one staff member to every 10 children. In the child care centres, the province will still be enforcing a one to eight ratio. Churchill said he would enter talks with the centres to look at possibly changing that figure.

Pre-registration for the program is ongoing at the 43 schools that will have pre-primary classes. The government says every child who is registered will be accommodated.

-reprinted from Global News

**Related link:** Nova Scotia's new pre-primary program 'unrealistic,' early childhood educators say <sup>[3]</sup>

**Region:** Nova Scotia <sup>[4]</sup>

**Tags:** ratios <sup>[5]</sup>

hours <sup>[6]</sup>

school system <sup>[7]</sup>

pre-school <sup>[8]</sup>

workforce [9]

cost [10]

legislation and regulation [11]

---

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/07/nova-scotia-pre-primary-program-gets-mixed-response>

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/07/nova-scotia-pre-primary-program-gets-mixed-response> [2] <https://globalnews.ca/news/3610330/nova-scotia-pre-primary-program-gets-mixed-response/> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/07/nova-scotia-s-new-pre-primary-program-unrealistic-early-childhood-> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7853> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/ratios> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/hours> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/school-system> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/pre-school> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/workforce> [10] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/cost> [11] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>