

# Local childcare providers look for more information following new money in budget <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Childcare providers in Prince Albert are looking for more information following the release of the province's budget when they learned of more money being directed to childcare in the province.

Tuesday's provincial budget called earmarked new funding to support the creation of an additional 2,500 new childcare spaces by 2020. The province says \$100.7 million has been set aside for early years projects in the 2018-19 budget, including an increase of \$20.8 million from the federal government for the Canada-Saskatchewan Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

That agreement is a three-year, \$41 million program to improve access to quality childcare, support inclusion and enhance early learning opportunities. Some of the funding available through the agreement will work to reduce existing waitlists.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education said the agreement will create 1,500 additional licensed in-home spaces, 950 licensed centre-based spaces and 65 francophone spaces in communities across the province by 2019-20. The spaces will be targeted toward children ages 0-6, and organizations offering childcare to vulnerable families, Indigenous families, new Canadians and francophone communities.

Donna Strauss, executive director at Family Futures, said there is a huge need in Prince Albert for more childcare spaces for infants under 18 months. Those spaces are generally more expensive to operate, she said.

"We have, I can tell you, 200 names on our waiting list, but most of those are for babies," Strauss added. "Women have a hard time being successful, whether it's returning to school or returning to work because they can't find suitable childcare."

Gail Szautner with Children's Choice in Prince Albert agreed that more childcare options are needed in the city, but said it's hard to comment without specific details about where the additional money announced in the budget will be allocated.

"There's no doubt there's a huge need for more spaces for sure, but until we get the details about what all of this means, you can't give a fair comment," she said.

The government maintains there are currently 1,041 spaces available across 24 licensed child care centres in Prince Albert. Ninety of those spaces are designated specifically for infants. There are an extra 57 spaces in six licensed family care home providers, including some for infants.

The province is currently accepting applications from organizations interested in developing new child care spaces in Saskatchewan. The deadline to apply is May 11.

-reprinted from paNOW

**Region:** Saskatchewan <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** spaces <sup>[4]</sup>

child care <sup>[5]</sup>

funding <sup>[6]</sup>

accessibility <sup>[7]</sup>

affordability <sup>[8]</sup>

wait list <sup>[9]</sup>

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