

Quality matters when providing child care ^[1]

New assessments required for programming, staff

Author: Sullivan, Nikki

Source: Cape Breton Post

Format: Article

Publication Date: 18 Apr 2018

AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

A new funding model for licensed child-care providers in Nova Scotia is aiming to ensure every facility provides the highest quality programming and staff possible.

“The sector told us they wanted this,” said Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development Zach Churchill.

“We’re just coming out of a pretty intensive consultation that we engaged in this fall with the sector. This is all being sector-driven, in terms of where the investments are going in the sector, from a quality standpoint, from an accessibility standpoint, from an affordability standpoint.”

There are three parts to the new funding model, which falls under the title Quality Matters: Inclusive Quality Child Care. These are the inclusion support grant, the program support fund and the quality investment grant.

The inclusion support grant replaces the supported child care grant. It helps centres with programming, supplies and support staff for students with special needs. While little has changed in terms of the amount of money eligible, there is an added requirement to get the grant. Centres applying will have to undergo regular assessments of their programs and staff training levels.

It is the same with the quality investment grant and the program support fund, which are replacing the early childhood enhancement grant and the wage support fund. Centres will have to undergo various assessments, called Continuous Quality Improvement, to prove they are focused on providing the best service possible.

Before the changes, licensed child-care providers were subject to inspections of their space and inspections to make sure they are following regulations, like proper number of early childhood educators to students or proper amount of daylight in the centre. These inspections will still be done, along with the assessments of programming and staff.

“A big part of this is quality, so there are bigger expectations that we are putting on the child care centres to ensure that every single regulated centre that is operating is operating at the highest quality ... that is providing an inclusive environment.”

nicole.sullivan@cbpost.com ^[3]

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