

Windsor educators want to know source of funding for planned daycare rebates ^[1]

The PC government will table its first budget April 11

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EXCERPTS

Daycare subsidies will be part of the Ontario PC budget for 2019, but early childhood educators in Windsor wonder where the money is coming from.

"As everybody is aware, we have a ton of education cuts coming through," said Stephanie Bashura, assistant supervisor at ABC Day Nursery of Windsor.

Sources close to the government say the PCs plan to reveal the rebate when the budget is tabled on Thursday.

The rebate was promised on the campaign trail last year. Low-income households would get a rebate of up to 75 percent of eligible child-care costs, measured at \$9,000 a year for a child under six.

Even higher income families will be eligible for this rebate if it's the same as what was promised last year.

Bashura said it would help middle-class families.

"They don't ever get a tax break or anything happening for that. So when they're paying, they're paying full fee," she said.

Obrenija Murphy, who works as a registered early childhood educator at the nursery, said it costs her a lot to bring her child to daycare.

However, her daughter is learning important skills and making friends, which Murphy finds important.

She talks about some family members who have chosen not to send their child to daycare because of cost.

"And when they see the things that my daughter has learned, they would consider it I think, if it was more affordable," said Murphy.

What Wendy Oakey, another registered ECE, worries about is how long these subsidies would last.

If the rebate program is exactly the same as previously pledged, the PCs have said it would cost \$389 million a year. However, a detailed analysis by the non-partisan C.D. Howe Institute think-tank puts that cost at \$945 million a year.

"I feel like they've dangled different things like this and different programs like this for daycare since I've been here," said Oakey.

"Different things will come out and next budget, they get taken away."

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