

Childcare concerns need to go higher up, stakeholders say ^[1]

Frustration abounds for Whistler parents

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EXCERPTS

While some Whistler parents remain frustrated with childcare options and a perceived lack of urgency at municipal hall, the issue expands far beyond Whistler, say local stakeholders.

"It's got to go bigger picture," said Kari Gaudet, executive director at the Whistler Children's Centre.

"It's definitely got to go bigger picture, and it's the provincial government, it's the federal government."

The lack of childcare options is exacerbated by staffing, housing, a lack of people going into the Early Childhood Educator (ECE) field, and licensing requirements, Gaudet said.

"When it comes to the licensing requirements and people going into the field, those are provincial problems," she said.

"This isn't a Whistler problem, this is a provincial problem, and essentially it's a federal problem as well, but it's nothing to do with Whistler."

In more than two decades working in childcare, Gaudet said she's seen different council members try to take the issue on.

"They want to come and talk to me and learn about what could be done, and then they try a couple of things and they realize how quickly you hit a brick wall," she said.

"I think we just need to be talking to the higher ups."

The most recent bout of frustration stems from the Resort Municipality of Whistler's (RMOW) Kids on the Go after-school program registration, which once again saw dozens of parents camping out overnight in the rain to get their kids a spot in the program.

Lesley Clements said she lined up at Meadow Park Sports Centre at 1 a.m. on Aug. 10 - the earliest she's ever been there - and still ended up with No. 46, which secured her "about two thirds" of the spaces she needed.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

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