

Fees to increase at regionally operated childcare centres ^[1]

Infant fees to increase \$10 per day, regional officials say

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EXCERPTS

Parents who have small children in regionally-operated childcare centres can expect to pay more for care in the new year, according to a report going before council Wednesday.

Fees are going up at five regionally operated childcare centres.

The cost increase will hit parents of infants the hardest.

Infant care is set to go up by \$10 a day starting Jan. 1, 2020, to a total of \$74.70 per day.

Toddler care will go up by \$3 per day, to a total of \$50.90 per day.

Preschool care will go up by \$2 per day, to a total of \$47.20 per day.

However, parents who enrolled their infants in childcare before Sept. 1, 2019 will continue paying the old rate until their children age into the toddler classroom, according to Barbara Cardow, the region's director of children's services.

Fees are also going up at childcare centres that have service contracts with the region. Cardow said that since each operator sets its own fees, she doesn't yet know what the increase will be at those centres.

The region is blaming the fee hikes on cost-sharing changes between the region and the province, the report said.

The report to council added that the region had previously reduced costs through a fee-reduction pilot project that was paid for by funding from the province's Ministry of Education. The funding has since been reduced, Cardow said.

The province has created a new tax credit for parents with kids in childcare, which is expected to provide families that receive it with an average of \$1,300, according to a report by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

The FAO said childcare costs in Ontario are the second-highest in the country, second only to British Columbia.

In response to an inquiry from CBC News, the education minister issued a statement via email saying the government is making investments in childcare that will provide parents with more choice, including through the new child care tax credit.

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