

'My kids need to go somewhere': Orangeville parents devastated by plan to close Jean Hamlyn daycare ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Just the thought of where she'd send her kids has Rebecca Scott Rawn choked up.

The Orangeville mother takes her children to after school care at Jean Hamlyn Day Care Centre and is devastated by the proposal of shutting it down.

The County of Dufferin runs the centre, which has 65 spots for children.

A recent report submitted by the Director of Community Services of Dufferin County states that the childcare centre is running at a deficit and with anticipated funding cuts from the province the centre should be shut down.

"It's emotional," said Scott Rawn, who has no idea where she would send her two children. "My husband and I both work full time."

She and a group of parents are fighting to save the daycare centre, just the same as how parents rallied around the facility in 2012 when the County was looking at selling or closing the space.

The Ministry of Education will be reducing the portion of funding they provide municipalities for operating costs for daycare from 80 per cent to 50 per cent in 2021 and in 2022 will reduce the allowable funding for administrative costs from 10 per cent to five.

Currently the Jean Hamlyn building, which is owned by the Town of Orangeville, needs more than \$330,000 in capital repairs. The county expects to lose an additional \$352,000 in provincial funding during the next couple years.

If they shut the facility down, the county could save about \$330,000 and put it towards their childcare subsidy program.

"In order to recover costs, the fees would need to be considerably higher than the median rate in the Dufferin community and would be higher than the per diem amount provided by the fee subsidy program," said Anna McGregor, director of community services.

Dufferin County is one of 12 municipal regions that operate childcare centres out of 47 in Ontario and that number is dwindling.

With new daycares opening in Grand Valley, Orangeville and Shelburne staff say that there would be more opportunity for parents to use the Dufferin County subsidy and find spots for their children in private care.

For parents like Ashleigh Lundie, the location of Jean Hamlyn is key.

The facility sits right across the street from Princess Elizabeth Public School and serves a number of students from the school.

"My son, he loves going there," said Lundie, who moved to Orangeville three years ago.

Her son left behind a tight-knit friend group and she said he's found a real sense of belonging at Jean Hamlyn.

"All of the parents share the same sentiment," said Lundie.

Scott Rawn agrees that the childcare centre is a gem in the community. Parents will be attending the committee meeting on Nov. 28 where the report will be discussed, as well as the following Dufferin County council meeting on Dec. 12.

"My kids need to go somewhere," she said, explaining that she fully understands the financial strain on the county. "This is what municipal services are for."

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Region: Ontario ^[2]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/11/%E2%80%98my-kids-need-go-somewhere%E2%80%99-orangeville-parents-devastated-plan> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856>