

Quebec's daycare system is headed for a labour shortage, union warns ^[1]

Union officials are accusing François Legault's CAQ government of "devaluing" the work of early childhood educators.

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EXCERPTS

Union officials are sounding the alarm about Quebec's daycare system, which they say is headed for a labour shortage.

At a press conference Sunday morning, representatives of the union said the sector is struggling to retain and replace workers.

According to an internal poll conducted by the Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux that received more than 2,700 responses, about one in four child-care workers would like to retire or leave the field in the next two years.

Part of the problem is professionals are being overworked, said Véronique De Sève, vice-president of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux.

"Even if you believe in what you're doing and even if you like children, the work conditions aren't necessarily winners," she told Presse Canadienne.

She also denounced the CAQ government's "political choices," such as extending pre-kindergarten to include four-year-olds.

"The government is telling longtime Centre de la petite enfance workers, 'What you do, it's not important — it's of insufficient quality, it's not interesting'," she said.

De Sève suggested that this "devaluing" is putting off students who might be interested in joining the field. The CSN is warning of declining interest in CEGEP early childhood education programs.

Last spring, the Fédération des intervenantes en petite enfance du Québec (FIPEQ-CSQ) reported that the number of students in the latest early childhood education cohort was 918 fewer than in 2014-15. At the time, FIPEQ-CSQ president Valérie Grenon called on the CAQ government to revalue a profession that she said had been hurt by former premier Philippe Couillard's budget cuts.

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