

Local child care centre fears for discontinuation of subsidized program ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

One daycare centre in High River is worried about what will happen to families should the Province's subsidized daycare program be axed by the current UCP Government.

Daydreams Early Learning Child Care Centre is one of two authorized centres who offer the \$25 per day daycare program through the Provincial Government.

Executive Director Julia Gwyn-Morris says she's only seen the positive impact the program has had on both families and the economy.

"We've seen a dramatic change in people's abilities. We're not even talking low income families. We've seen the impact this program has on the middle income earner who may have two or three kids and both mom and dad work full time jobs. I've seen nothing but good things and I would have done it years ago had this been offered to me."

Gwyn-Morris says parents who are able to work are paying more taxes and participating in the working economy, and they're typically happier family units when not facing the stress of child care challenges.

Currently, any family who makes under \$50,000 annually is covered 100 per cent as long as the parent or parent's are working.

Those earning above \$50,000 in yearly income are still able to apply for subsidy, and the most you'll pay is \$25 per day.

Gwyn-Morris says some people believe the subsidy only helps higher income earners, which she says she has yet to see.

"Some people have controversy about whether or not high income families or millionaires take advantage of our day care, but I will be honest and say I have never met a millionaire yet in my centre, as typically those families have nannies or take advantage of other options." She adds "Yes we have families who make \$60-80,000 a year but they have four children and so it really even's out."

The UCP Government has not officially announced the discontinuation of that program, but Gwyn-Morris says she hopes the ministers understand the effects of this program on rural families.

"I do think there is a fear, because we don't know the direction the Government is going. I hope they see the value of what this does for all families because if they reduce this program or take it away, how many parents attending our centre or another in our area and mostly mothers or single parents will have to leave their jobs? What does that do for a struggling economy?"

She says she hopes the Government will look Subsidized Daycare the same way they look at infrastructure, since child care is just as important for getting parents back to work as things like roads, transit and education.

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