

Parents uneasy about sending children to daycare amid COVID-19: StatCan ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

CALGARY -- Nearly one-third of Alberta parents say they won't send their kids back to daycare when spaces reopen or when the pandemic ends, according to numbers released Wednesday by Statistics Canada.

The report provides an overview of experiences of parents and families with children under 15 years old, both during and after childcare closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Physical distancing and the impact on employment have meant that parents have changed their usual routines and supports. Many children and families have been socially distancing for months.

The report suggests that 34 per cent of parents said yes to using childcare services when spaces reopen, and two per cent said they didn't stop using childcare throughout the pandemic.

Some daycare centers were allowed to stay open throughout the pandemic — with most of those providing childcare for frontline workers.

Among parents who were using childcare during the pandemic, 35 per cent had the same arrangement and the fees, while 46 per cent had a different arrangements and different fees.

All licensed daycares were allowed to open as of May 14 with strict guidelines mandated by the provincial government.

Even with the new health and safety measures in place when parents were asked why their children would not attend childcare services, 49 per cent said they were concerned about the health of their child or another member of the household.

With back-to-school approaching, mother of two young children, Nawana Petrin, a mother of two young children said she is feeling cautious.

"Staying two metres apart will be impossible with young children, and I just accept that," she said.

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