

Quebec wants to get rid of red tape to free up more daycare spaces ^[1]

Author: CTV News

Source: CTV News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 12 Mar 2021

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

QUEBEC CITY -- With time running out to meet a central campaign promise to deliver thousands of new subsidized childcare placements, the Quebec government says it is speeding up the process by clearing administrative red tape.

Under newly-proposed regulations, Quebec hopes to open between 5,000 to 7,000 new subsidized spaces by March next year.

Families Minister Mathieu Lacombe pledged on Friday to reduce the level of administrative steps from 17 to just nine. He says this would reduce the creation time from three to two years.

At the start of the CAQ government's mandate, Lacombe promised to create 13,500 new open spots in subsidized childcare services, mainly in early childhood centres (CPE), in less than two years.

But, it only managed to open 2,500. Demand, however, continued to grow, with the waiting list now exceeding 51,000 names.

So, what do they want to change?

On Friday, Quebec announced it will loosen the rules, easing the standards for public calls for tenders. Under the current rules, any new daycare project must be the subject of a call for tenders starting at \$50,000.

Under the new rules, that wouldn't be necessary if the project costs less than \$105,700 overall. Instead, it will be able to operate by mutual agreement.

Last month, Lacombe blamed some of the CAQ's delays on red tape, saying that the administrative rules in his department were too rigid and too numerous.

He said he wanted to simplify and make the process more flexible, pledging to draft a white paper and to table a bill in the coming months to review the overall framework for child-care services.

Lacombe's political opponents criticized him for not doing more to provide spaces for childcare.

"It is the families of Quebec, it is the women who pay the price," said PQ families critic Véronique Hivon, who called the situation a "real crisis."

"[There is one] main constraint to the development of places, his name is Mathieu Lacombe," said Liberal MNA Marc Tanguay, who said the CAQ had demonstrated a "disastrous record" on the childcare file.

Region: Quebec ^[3]

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