Home > Richmond childcare fees among highest in Canada, study finds

Richmond childcare fees among highest in Canada, study finds [1]

Childcare enrollment in Richmond dropped by 32 per cent last year
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EXCERPTED

Childcare fees in Richmond continued to increase last year, with the city ranking third most expensive in Canada for families with toddlers in need of care.

According to the latest annual report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), child care fees for toddlers in Richmond rose by eight per cent last year, costing parents a median monthly fee of $1,300.

Toronto's median toddler fees of $1,557 a month make it the most expensive city for families, while Richmond Hill, Ont. ranked second, with median monthly toddler fees of $1,327.

The study, the seventh annual report on childcare fees issued by the think tank, uses data collected from licensed full-day childcare centres, as well as home or family childcare providers in 37 cities across the country.

Five B.C. cities were included in the survey, conducted between September and November 2020: Richmond, Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey and Kelowna.

Richmond families with infants also pay a median monthly fee of $1,300, making the city tenth most expensive for such families.

Fees for preschoolers, meanwhile, also rose by eight per cent, costing parents a median monthly fee of $1,028.

The fee increases include B.C.'s fee-reduction program of $100 a month per preschool-aged child in a childcare centre and $60 a month in family child care. The childcare fee reduction program, introduced in 2018, does not set a maximum fee, but it limits how much participating providers can increase fees by.

In comparison, in Quebec – where childcare is heavily subsidized and there are set fees – infant to preschool childcare costs a median monthly fee of $181.

Across the country, fees are higher in the for-profit sector than in the not-for-profit sector. In Richmond, for-profit fees are 28 per cent higher than not-for-profit fees for three to five year olds. That same difference is seen in Vancouver, Burnaby and Kelowna, while Surrey's for-profit centres cost 60 per cent more than non-profit ones.

Enrolment also dropped by 32 per cent in Richmond last year, which could be due to COVID-19 or parents choosing to not send their children to child care for various reasons, including high fees.

The childcare report is based on data from a survey involving 11,000 phone calls between Sept. 22, 2020 and Nov. 13, 2020, representing a sample of 53 per cent of regulated full-time centre-based and regulated family childcare in 37 Canadian cities.

The survey tracked costs for infant, toddler and pre-school aged children in centre or family-based, full-time regulated child care.
Region: British Columbia [3]
Tags: child care fees [4]