

Parents, early childhood educators demonstrate against Quebec's childcare shortage ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Early childhood educators and parents are calling for an end to daycare shortages in Quebec.

Demonstrations were held across the province to send a message to the government that the situation is a crisis.

Nearly 51,000 children in the province are currently on a waiting list for subsidized daycare, but early childhood educators say they are overworked, exhausted and are choosing to leave the profession all together.

Last year, the Quebec government announced it will be converting 3,500 private daycare spots into subsidized ones, but many say it's not enough to fix the root of the problem.

"It's like shovelling the problem forward," says Emma Bernard, who has been working in the daycare system for a decade.

"In five years, 10 years, those educators are going to be like 'wow, I'm sorry, those are not good conditions,' and they are going to leave again and we're going to go in circles."

Without enough spots to go around, many mothers fear they won't be able to go back to work, including Loïka, a mother of an eight-month-old. She's been waiting for a spot in a early childhood centre (CPE) for over a year.

"I'm supposed to go back to work in September but depending on how it's going, I'm not sure," she said. "We don't all make lots of money for private daycare."

Parti Québécois family critic Véronique Hivon calls the situation a huge step back for women.

"This government doesn't seem to realize the impact of this crisis on women especially," Hivon says.

"Women who can't go back to work. Women who are educators who are not valued enough and who leave the profession."

Hivon added that the current and previous governments were short-sighted.

"We are facing what we are facing because there was a lack of action — and who pays the price? The parents, the children and the educators," she said.

In a statement to Global News, a spokesperson for Quebec's family minister Mathieu Lacombe says the government is currently working on improving the situation.

"Already, Minister Mathieu Lacombe has cut the bureaucracy last March in order to accelerate the development of thousands of spaces," said spokesperson Antoine De la Durantaye.

"The spaces are coming! In the coming year, it is estimated that between 5,000 and 7,000 subsidized spaces will be created! In addition to these measures, the minister will announce tomorrow a new concrete solution to make spaces available more quickly."

De la Durantaye also noted daycare spots have been steadily decreasing since 2014 and says the pandemic made it much worse.

"In the last budget, there is almost \$100 million to attract new family caregivers and encourage them to take more children. These are places that could be created very quickly. An announcement is coming about this very soon."

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: advocacy ^[4]

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Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/05/parents-early-childhood-educators-demonstrate-against-quebec%E2%80%99s> [2]

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