

# Pilot program offering extended hours at P.E.I. child-care centres seeing low demand <sup>[1]</sup>

'The uptake was very limited and in some instances it was not existent'

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

Uptake for a pilot program offering extended hours at P.E.I. child-care centres has been lower than originally expected, raising questions about whether there's enough demand for the service across the province.

The federal government announced last week it was committing \$121.3 million over the next five years to fund the province's child-care system, aiming to reduce fees to \$10 a day. Part of the money is slated to go toward the development of more flexible times of care in order to suit parents who work non-standard hours.

But some child-care centres that have been offering extended hours in the province have actually stopped doing so due to lack of demand.

"So we actually started with 14 centres who were under this project and over time some centres found that despite having the extended hours, the demand was not there for them," said Doreen Gillis, director of early childhood development in the province.

"So the uptake was very limited and in some instances it was not existent, and so they returned to standard hours of operation."

The number of child-care centres that are still part of the multi-year pilot has been cut to 10.

## Awaiting consultations

The program started in the fall of 2018 in order to meet a goal contained in the child-care deal the province signed with Ottawa a year earlier. It provides additional space in child-care centres for families of seasonal workers as well as extending hours of operation.

Gillis said she hasn't heard of centres still in the pilot having any wait-lists. She said the government will start consulting with the participating sites and families.

"We're going to work to identify what are the needs in those particular areas and what are the barriers to families actually participating in the types of programs and alternate hours that are being offered," Gillis said.

She added COVID-19 wasn't a setback for the pilot and that participating centres continued to offer extended hours during the pandemic.

**Region:** Prince Edward Island <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** non-standard hours <sup>[4]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 9 Aug 2021):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/08/pilot-program-offering-extended-hours-pe-child-care-centres-seeing>

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<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-extended-child-care-hours-program-1.6131220> <sup>[3]</sup>

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