

Legault government rejects Liberal leader's proposal for right to subsidized child-care spaces in Quebec ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

QUEBEC CITY -- The Legault government has no intention of creating a new right for a child to have a guaranteed, subsidized child care space, nor does it intend to nationalize the daycare network.

Family Minister Mathieu Lacombe categorically rejected Wednesday in a press scrum the proposal made by the leader of the official opposition, Dominique Anglade, in favour of the right of children to have a place in daycare.

Going in that direction would be unrealistic, according to him.

The day before, in Orford, the Liberal leader indicated her intention to table a bill in the National Assembly to ensure that access to child care services becomes a real right in Quebec, as is the case for access to school.

She recalled that more than 50,000 Quebec children were waiting for a child-care space, 9,000 more children than in October 2018, committing to offer all parents a quality subsidized space at a single rate within five years, regardless of their region or income.

Minister Lacombe has committed to completing the child-care network and to introducing a bill on the subject this fall to modernize the current legislative framework. But there is no question of changing the existing structures, reviewing ownership or nationalizing the system.

"Child care is entirely private," he argued, seeing it as an obstacle to ensuring a child's right to a place.

"It's not as simple as it sounds" to guarantee a place for every child, he added, without revealing the solutions and "other strategies" he wants to implement to meet parents' needs.

Broadly speaking, Quebec's plan is to create 37,000 spaces, although no timetable has yet been set.

In addition to the critical shortage of spaces, the government is also facing a shortage of child care workers.

At the same time, the Chair of the Conseil du trésor, Sonia LeBel, has launched an appeal to the unions representing child-care workers at the Centres de la petite enfance (CPE), who feel they are largely underpaid.

She said she wants to accelerate the current process to begin intensive negotiations now to renew their collective agreements.

In 2020, a qualified educator could expect to earn between \$19 and \$25 an hour. Depending on the offers on the table, he or she could expect to earn between \$21 and \$28.

The minister said she was aware of the need to catch up on wages, both to retain child-care staff and to attract new recruits. She called the government's current offer, tabled in July, "generous."

"There is already an enhancement. The discussions are not starting from scratch," she told a media scrum, adding that qualified full-time educators would also be entitled to bonuses.

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: federal election ^[4]

child rights ^[5]

affordability ^[6]

national child care system ^[7]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/09/legault-government-rejects-liberal-leaders-proposal-right-subsidized> [2]
<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/legault-government-rejects-liberal-leader-s-proposal-for-right-to-subsidized-child-care-spaces-in-quebec-1.5577497> [3]
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