

Province pushing non-profit childcare over private ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

PRINCE GEORGE – British Columbia is in the midst of what many call a childcare crisis, and the path forward for the sector will be vastly different according to the opposition.

That path forward includes funding priority only for non-profit childcare centres, as outlined in government documents and by the BC Liberals who claim the province is trying to eliminate private care.

“The NDP’s appalling decision to make it cost-prohibitive for private child care providers to operate is purely based on ideology, and families will end up paying the price for it,” said Karin Kirkpatrick, BC Liberal Critic for Children, Family Development and Childcare.

BC Minister of State for Child Care Katrina Chan said the claims by the opposition are simply untrue.

“What the BC Liberals are claiming is simply untrue, we have been working with diverse providers, we’ve increased funding significantly for all providers, when it comes to reducing parent fees, supporting their operation with operational funding and to maintain their spaces as well, and we will continue to do that,” said Chan.

As of 2020-21, private for-profit childcare providers account for 60,968 spaces or 48% of the childcare spots in BC. Non-profit centres make up most of the remaining spaces with slightly over 50,000 good for 41% province-wide.

According to the Ministry of Children and Family Development Decision Note obtained by the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) by the BC Liberal Caucus, the implementation of this plan would be negative for private providers.

Chan says the government does still plan to work with both private and non-profit providers for childcare, although the opposition and critics have said otherwise.

The decision note does mention the funding for residence-based providers will continue.

For-profit providers will remain eligible for operating funding (provided that they opt into the universal child care system), which will continue to support both current and expanded for-profit child care operations. Continued access to operating funding may encourage for-profit providers to create new child care spaces, regardless of the availability of space creation funding.

The province is currently in year four of their childcare plan with goals of having childcare for \$10 a day by 2025-26 with help from Ottawa.

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