

Nearly 14,000 spots added to Quebec's daycare system ^[1]

Additions are part of \$3B plan to expand network

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EXCERPTS

Nearly 14,000 additional subsidized spots have been added to Quebec's daycare system since the end of October, when the province announced \$3 billion would be dedicated to expanding the system.

On Oct. 21 the province announced a goal of opening up 37,000 new spots by 2025, with 17,000 of those spots expected over the next three years. Quebec had 212,497 subsidized spaces at the time of the announcement.

"As of this afternoon, 82 per cent of our target has already been achieved," said Quebec Family Minister Mathieu Lacombe during a news conference Sunday.

The goal is to ensure every child can have a place in public daycare, Premier François Legault has said.

Of the \$3 billion dedicated to expanding the network, \$1.8 billion has been set aside to implement 45 measures to reorganize the system, including an increase in the tax credit for child-care expenses.

The plan also includes the conversion of 3,500 non-subsidized spots.

Of the 13,974 spots opened recently, the largest number is in the Montérégie region just south of Montreal, where over 4,200 have opened, the ministry said.

Over 1,700 were opened in the Laurentians, north of Montreal. More than 1,600 were also added to the Quebec City region.

The province said it will be making use of prefabricated buildings while building new daycares to ensure enough space is available by 2025.

This should make it possible to reduce construction time from nine to three months for at least 1,600 spots, the ministry said.

"This will allow 20 new childcare centres to be built," the minister said.

Network still grappling with staffing shortages

An additional 18,000 educators are still needed to meet the needs of the system, the minister said, which is facing a backlog of children waiting for daycare spots.

More than 50,000 children were on waiting lists last year, mostly for subsidized spots.

A new work-study program has been opened with the hope of training and hiring more than 17,000 educators by March 2025.

The union representing daycare workers welcomed the news, but says it still has serious concerns about staffing.

"Considering the current labour shortage, we are seriously questioning whether there are enough educators and staff available to fill these positions," said Line Camerlain, vice president of the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN)

She also questioned the province's emphasis on expanding subsidization for private daycares that have been included under Bill 1 — a bill aimed at reforming the public daycare system.

If passed, the law tabled by Lacombe would allow child-care centres and private daycares to no longer have a cap on the number of facilities they can operate.

Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: child care spaces ^[4]

child care system ^[5]

public investment ^[6]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/02/nearly-14000-spots-added-quebecs-daycare-system> [2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/new-daycare-spots-quebec-1.6341766> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7855> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care-spaces> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care-system> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9126>