

Kamloops preschool workers frustrated with delay of \$10-a-day child care ^[1]

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Patti Pernitsky has been waiting four years for the provincial government to follow through on their promise. Families with school aged children who use Kamloops United Church preschool and out of school care cannot access basic subsidies from the province.

“It’s out there, it’s that carrot that’s dangling for us, and I live in hope because that’s of course the two programs that I present here – preschool and out-of-school care.

The subsidies are available for children aged newborn to five in daycare only.

In Budget 2022, the NDP announced their plan for \$20-a-day childcare by late 2023, far off from initial campaign promises, according to Kamloops-North Thompson MLA and finance critic Peter Milobar.

“It’s important to note the premier said back in 2017 that infants and toddlers would have \$10-a-day childcare in year one of his government. This is now their sixth budget and those kids have literally all aged out,” said Milobar.

There is a lack of childcare spaces as well as childcare workers. In February the NDP announced nearly \$50 million from the federal government that will encourage early childhood educator (ECE) students. They aim to add 130 new spaces, fund bursaries and give the students the ability to get higher credentials while continuing to work.

“Early childhood educators’ education, skills and passion are in high demand. And we are going to need thousands of child care professionals to fill those spaces and the new spaces that we’re creating,” said Katrina Chen, Minister of State for Child Care at a press conference on Feb. 18.

There are also funds earmarked for retention. Pernitsky said some daycares struggle to keep staff due to low pay.

“Most early childhood educators or early childhood educator assistants were making \$15-to-\$18 an hour. To have the early childhood wage enhancement, right bang on,” she said.

Pernitsky is hopeful her families will see reduced childcare costs as soon as possible.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: child care workforce ^[4]

\$10-a-day child care ^[5]

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