

Peel region needs 40,000 new spaces if Ontario agrees to \$10 per day childcare deal ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Region of Peel will need to dramatically ramp up the number of childcare spaces available if the provincial and federal governments agree to a \$10 per day childcare deal in Ontario.

A staff report highlighted a lack of childcare workers in Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. It is a “work force crisis,” staff said.

Demand for childcare in the region sits at 45 per cent of pre-pandemic levels but childcare providers said it is increasing. Staffing challenges are a barrier to the growing demand, regional staff said.

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A 2018 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found there was less than one licensed childcare space for every four non-school-aged children in Brampton

It also found the city had a childcare coverage rate of 21 per cent; Mississauga sat at 35 per cent.

The region said recruitment and retention of childcare workers has been “challenge” during the pandemic. Childcare workers have worked extra hours, extra duties and remained on the front lines throughout, staff said.

Councillors will consider the report on March 24 at a regional meeting.

The report recommended spending \$11.5 million from the Ministry of Education on an initiative to train more childcare workers.

GTA municipalities and public colleges are developing an accelerated program to address childcare staffing shortages.

A much-discussed deal between the governments of Canada and Ontario could make the shortages worse by fuelling demand.

The federal government plans to cut childcare costs 50 percent in 2022 and reach \$10 per day within four years.

“Staff project that, to meet growing demand, the number of licensed child care spaces in Peel for children under five years old would need to grow by approximately 40,000 spaces over the next four years,” the report said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Ontario Premier Doug Ford said Wednesday a childcare deal was close.

“Our teams are working together on a daily basis, and we’ll have an announcement very, very soon,” Ford said at a Honda plant in the Simcoe region.

The average price for childcare in Peel ranges from an average of \$52 to \$72 per day, the region said. It said lower prices would convince “many families to consider licensed child care.”

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: child care expansion ^[4]

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