

Child care program runs out of funds [CA-ON] ^[1]

Author: Monsebraaten, Laurie

Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 5 Sep 2008

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS An internationally recognized Toronto pilot project that knits affordable child care, family support and kindergarten into a seamless program has run out of funding, leaving parents and administrators sad and frustrated. "Parents really feel betrayed," said Regan Daley, whose 9-year-old twin sons are graduates of the project's integrated kindergarten and whose 4-year-old son, Rory, "blossomed" in preschool over the past two years. ... The Toronto First Duty pilot project, at Bruce Jr. Public School near Leslie St. and Eastern Ave., was part of a \$ 5.1 million five-year partnership between the City of Toronto, the Toronto District School Board and various community agencies. Annual operating funding of \$336,000 from the Atkinson Charitable Foundation ran out in June. The city's annual contribution of \$300,000 in operating and research grants ended in June 2006. The province, which has promised to introduce full-day learning for 4- and 5-year-olds starting in 2010, was surprised the Atkinson funding had run out. "We're certainly aware of this program ... but it's the first we've heard of their particular situation," said Kevin Spafford, a spokesperson for Children's Minister Deb Matthews. "We haven't received a request (for funding)," he said last night. "But it's certainly something we'd be willing to discuss with them." The loss of funding means families who had paid between \$5 and \$20 a day for preschool, child care and full-day kindergarten programs last year will now have to pay regular child-care fees ranging from \$30 to \$51 a day. Most of the flexibility to enrol children part-time is gone, as is the half-day preschool option. ... A spokesperson for the Atkinson Charitable Foundation said the charity understands parents' dismay, but as a charity it doesn't provide long-term financing and couldn't continue funding the pilot project forever & especially when it had accomplished what it set out to prove. "What we discovered is that this approach actually serves more families, is more affordable and flexible and provides better outcomes for children," said Christine Nunez. "Now it is time for governments to step up." ... Full-day learning for children in kindergarten was a key plank in the Liberals' election platform last fall. Earlier this year, they appointed Charles Pascal, the executive director of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, to draft an action plan by early next year. Toronto First Duty began in 2002 as a pilot project to show how a child-centred approach to early learning and care could serve both parents and children and remain affordable to families and taxpayers. Research showed children and families thrived in the program and that the model was no more costly than traditional child care. But the real bonus was the program's ability to reach a wider variety of families, including those with parents at home or working and studying part-time. ... - reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: funding ^[3]

integration ^[4]

full-day early learning ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/09/child-care-program-runs-out-funds-ca>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/09/child-care-program-runs-out-funds-ca> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/integration> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8149>