

Half of London daycares ready to offer \$10-a-day program ^[1]

The deadline to get applications in is Sept. 1

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EXCERPTS

Fifty per cent of daycares in the London region are ready to offer parents \$10-per-day care with one month left to sign up for the program.

The City of London said Tuesday that of the eligible 207 centres in Middlesex-London, 103 licensed centres have opted in. The majority are non-profit centres, with only six for-profit centres saying they want to take part.

So far, only two day cares have opted out, one for-profit and one non-profit. A city spokesperson said it will not release the list of centres until after the deadline on Sept. 1.

The provincial and federal governments announced the program in March to ease the financial burden for parents. This fall, parents will see a gradual reduction in fees, if their daycare is enrolled in the program. The cost will drop to \$10-a-day by 2025.

Some daycare operators in London say they are planning to sign on but they do have concerns.

"Doing the funding and applying for the funding and doing the refunds — it's pretty much a full time job," said Michele Andersen, the lead at Parkwood Children's Daycare Centre.

"So I guess we're worried about that. Like, who's going to do that? How are we going to have the staff to do that? How are we going to afford to do that?"

'A lot of guidelines, a lot of paperwork'

Diego Beltran, KidLogic's director, said that he's currently finishing up the application for the program, but it hasn't been a simple process.

"It's a lot of guidelines, a lot of paperwork that we've been going through the past few weeks," he said. "So it's been tricky, but we're definitely doing it because we want to be able to support families and we think it's going to be a great program."

He believes that long term, parents will benefit but right now there are some unknowns.

"The guidelines are there, but you don't really know what it's going to look like until it's up and running ... Nobody really knows how it really is going to affect each individual centre until they've signed up and they've received funding and they've gone through it."

Confused parents

Daycare operators also say parents tell them the rollout of the program difficult to understand. Some are expecting their fees to drop to \$10 in the fall, but that's not the case.

The program is being phased in over the next the next three years, with daycare costs being cut first by as much as 25 per cent, then by an average of 50 per cent, and finally reaching \$10 daily by 2025.

"I think there's a lot of miscommunication around it because people think, 'Oh, I'm getting \$10 a day child care,' but it's not really going to work like that," said Andersen. "It's going to be a process to get to the \$10."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

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

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