

Fewer than 10 child-care centres in Kingston, Ont. have opted into \$10-a-day program ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The clock is ticking for daycare centres to opt into the federal government's \$10-a-day program, since Ontario's government got on board with the plan in March.

With the deadline set for Sept. 1, daycare centres have to decide whether they want to participate, and for some, the decision is not an easy one to make.

"We haven't finalized our answer yet as to what our approach will be," says Apple a Daycare supervisor Betty Read. "It's looking like we won't be joining the \$10-a-day proposal."

And they're not the only child care centre that is leaning toward rejecting the plan.

The City of Kingston says fewer than 10 child care centres in the city have applied to join the program, but the city remains hopeful, saying in a statement, "We expect that by September 1 the majority of the local childcare providers that are eligible will be opting into the system."

Once part of the program, daycare centres will have 60 days to refund families 25 per cent of fees paid retroactive to April 1.

Read says there is very little information about that aspect.

"It's very unsettling to not know where the difference in funding is going to come from," says Read. "We are all for parents having reduced fees, but the problem is, where is that money coming from?"

The head of the Ontario Association of Independent Childcare Centres has called this program "chaos" and "disorganized," a sentiment shared by Read as well.

"It was very rushed. The private sector wasn't consulted at all," Read says. "We could have averted some of this by giving our input."

Apple a Daycare has notified the parents of the 53 children currently enrolled in their centre that they might not join the \$10-a-day program.

They say only one family decided to withdraw — but with 300 families on a waiting list, it could be that demand is still the bigger issue for families than the cost, at least for now.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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