

# Operators not all on board yet with Ontario's new \$10/day child care <sup>[1]</sup>

Peterborough non-profit Compass Early Learning and Care has opted in.

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS:

With the Ontario government extending the opt-in deadline for \$10/day child-care for operators to Nov. 1, a local operator said she hopes more daycare centres will sign on, but sees for-profit daycares potentially being weary.

"We're really happy that this is moving forward, and really see it as an opportunity to build a system of early learning and child care led by municipalities, which know their communities best," said Sheila Olan-MacLean, CEO of Compass Early Learning and Care. "That's our hope for the future and for this, and that's why we've opted in."

MacLean explained that current daycare rates can cost more than a day's wage, especially for younger parents, making it impractical for them to work.

"If they have a couple of preschool children, they probably pay more for child care than they do for their mortgage," MacLean said.

Maclean noted, however, that well this is great for families, many for-profit daycares were not on board.

"When the Ontario government first put out their guidelines, it said that if you're taking this money, you need to be open to audits," MacLean said. "And for-profits do not want how they spend their money to be public."

She explained that because Compass Early Learning and Care is a registered non-profit, regular audits are performed and financials are public. This means there was little downside for them to opt-in earlier this year.

To get more daycares to opt-in, the provincial government has since removed many of the restrictions and guidelines originally in place.

"They no longer have to have audits. And they've taken away the entire section that was on reasonable costs," MacLean said. "They've also taken away a provision limiting the amount of profit that a program could make."

If a business is taking public money, she said, they should be transparent about how it's being spent. But she recognizes why the government has removed the guidelines.

"I think the Ontario government is really interested in getting money out to parents for this year," MacLean said. "So, they want to make it as streamlined as possible for this year, which is why they're lifting all of these perceived barriers."

Peterborough resident Lorrie McGee Baird has a daughter who just had a baby, which will require affordable child care.

"For her to be able to go back to work. She's going to need to have \$10 a day child care. Otherwise, it makes no sense to work," Baird said.

For-profit daycares might be cautious about opting-in, she said, since the program has yet to be finalized.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** \$10-a-day <sup>[4]</sup>

non-profit child care <sup>[5]</sup>

Canada-wide agreement <sup>[6]</sup>

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