Daycare on Manitoulin Island prepares to close temporarily affecting 25 children [1]

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EXCERPTS

The Assiginack Child Care Centre located in the small community of Manitowaning, on Manitoulin Island, is closing its doors for at least a month due to a staffing shortage.

In a statement the centre's executive director, Andrea Lewis, said, "We are very saddened that it has come to this. We have been struggling for quite some time to find staff. We know that this is a real hardship; especially when we have so many families already involved with childcare as well as many families who have been actively looking for childcare. Ideally we would like to not close at all, but we will use this time to recruit and better prepare staff for working in the field of childcare."

25 children will be without care as of September 20th and Lewis told CTV News at least two to three staff will need to be hired before they can re-open. While she says it would be great to have those individuals be Early Childhood Educators, anyone who has a background with working with children is encouraged to apply.

"It can be hard for people who have never worked in the childcare industry to understand how much goes into the day to day of working in this field. Unfortunately, this is a very underpaid and often undervalued field, so we often lose staff to other opportunities with better pay. Staff retention is a problem across the province as many centers are suffering from staff shortages.," added Lewis.

This centre isn't the only one to be affected by staffing shortages; Carolyn Ferns, Public Policy Coordinator, with Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, said it's a problem being felt across Ontario.

"I've heard from centres who are closing down rooms, that have sent out messages to families saying can you send your child maybe only a few days a week because we can't operate at capacity things like that then you know that we have to address the childcare workforce crisis and we can't do it without address the low wages in the childcare sector," Ferns advised.

Ferns told CTV all of the child care centres that the coalition represents on some level are experiencing staffing challenges.

All of this comes at a time when we should be expanding child care with the Canada-wide early childhood education care plan rolling out, Fern added.

"Which means that childcare is going to be more affordable for families and that's great, but unless we solve the workforce crisis, we're not going to be able to serve the families that are in the system now, let alone expand to serve more families."

Ferns said while the government continues to push training more early childhood educators and providing more professional development opportunities the real way to solve the problem she says is by changing the retention figure which shows that Early Childhood Educators only stay in the field for an average of 3 years before leaving the profession.

"We know what needs to happen to change this. We need to improve the wages and working conditions to turn early childhood education and childcare work from sort of a stop that people make on their way to a different career or somewhere you know, people go in with high hopes and wanting to make a difference for families and then find that they're burnt out."

Updates on the Assiginack Child Care are communicated on their Facebook page.

Region: Ontario [3]
Tags: child care [4]
closure [5]
staff shortage [6]

[1] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/09/daycare-manitoulin-island-prepares-close-temporarily-affecting-25 [2] https://northernontario.ctvnews.ca/daycare-on-manitoulin-island-prepares-to-close-temporarily-affecting-25-children-1.6064215 [3] https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856 [4] https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care [5] https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/closure [6] https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9187