

'I'm scrambling every second': Parents still trying to find daycare ahead of school closures Monday ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

LANGLEY, B.C. - At Curious Kids Children's Centre in Aldergrove, they will honor the life of the Queen in their own way Monday.

"We're going to do a bit of a tea party. The children will make crowns," explained the centre's owner Debbie Lemire.

The daycare is choosing to stay open even as many daycares shut down Monday to mark a national day of mourning for Queen Elizabeth II.

"It was a tough call for sure," said Lemire, who had to weigh the concerns of parents and the needs of staff after a sudden announcement from the province Tuesday that schools would close.

The announcement left many working parents in a frenzy and daycare operators uncertain what to do.

"We got calls," said Lemire. "We got emails. Messages all over. Kind of a bit of a panic, sort of, 'Are you guys going to be closing?'"

Ultimately, she decided to stay open.

"It's just not worth it to put that panic into parents," she said. "I think it was just too short of notice to ask parents to either take a day off without pay or just struggle to find the care."

Natalie Fleury is a single mother of three. She has to work Monday, but doesn't have daycare.

"It's one of those things. I'm scrambling every second and contacting everyone I know to try and find somebody and work it out. If not, that's a day unpaid I don't get," she said.

Fleury, who is an operations manager at Perfection Cleaning, said working from home isn't always possible because of the tasks her work day entails.

Along with schools, most Crown corporations will also be closed Monday.

"As much as it works for them, I don't think they have families' best interests (in mind)," Fleury said of the decision to shut down schools.

B.C.'s premier acknowledged concerns from parents who are unable to find child care ahead of the school closures.

"I very much regret that a time that should have been for solemn reflection on 70 years of service by Queen Elizabeth II for the people of Canada was complicated by a decision the federal government made without significant consultation with provinces," Premier John Horgan said Friday.

"I understand the challenges for parents. I very much hope that we can get through Monday the best we all can."

In Langley School District, where childcare centres at the schools will also not open Monday, the district said it is continuing to "work with any self-contained and self-sufficient childcare operators to provide the option to stay open."

There is some relief for families in Vancouver, where community centres are offering additional childcare programs.

Still, the governments' decisions continue to leave many parents faced with a royal dilemma.

Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: child care ^[4]

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Links

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