

Quebec launching new office to accelerate creation of daycare spaces ^[1]

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Excerpts

With thousands of children on a waiting list for child care, Quebec is setting up a new government office to deal with the backlog.

More than 33,300 children were on a waiting list for a space as of Aug. 31.

In October 2021, Quebec launched a "Grand chantier pour les familles," which aimed to ensure a place for all children by 2024-2025. Projects have been submitted to the Ministry of the Family, but for various reasons, it can take a long time for the projects to materialize.

Quebec is therefore launching "Bureau d'accélération des projets" to speed up the process.

In an interview on Monday, Family Minister Suzanne Roy said the office will meet for the first time this month and then every two weeks.

"When a problem is reported, it will find out what is delaying or blocking the process, and then work to solve the problem. And his decisions will be binding," she said.

"In order for decisions to be made more quickly, to avoid back and forth, when there are difficulties, exceptions or special cases, it will be an office that will do an enforceable follow-up. It will make decisions and it will move," said Roy.

The minister wants to "avoid at all costs" projects that exceed the two-year deadline for completion. This often includes design and construction.

Currently, there are 700 projects underway. She could not say how many of these are actually stalled, as the number fluctuates and depends on various factors.

She noted that since the launch of the Grand chantier pour les familles in October 2021, more than 8,000 spaces have been created, "a 20-year high," she said. But the need is even greater -- hence the need to accelerate.

The Association québécoise des Centres de la petite enfance (AQCPÉ) was pleased with Minister Roy's initiative.

"It is to go faster, to unblock [the projects]. We had asked Mathieu Lacombe, the previous minister. So, that the minister puts it in place quickly at the beginning of his mandate, for us, it's very good news," said Hélène Gosselin, president of the board of directors of the AQCPÉ.

She gave examples of projects that can be delayed or blocked because of a problem with the size of the land, the notary or a change in the development adviser, which results in several "round trips" with government officials.

She hopes that when a solution is found for a particular project, it "can be used as a model" for other projects that face a similar problem.

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Region: Quebec ^[3]

Tags: waitlist ^[4]

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