

Childcare Deserts and How to Fill Them ^[1]

Author: Baldwin, C.

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AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

A report titled, Not done yet: \$10-a-day childcare requires addressing Canada's childcare deserts, released on May 16th, 2023, states, "Saskatchewan has the highest proportion of children living in childcare deserts by far: 85,500 younger children live in a postal code where there are more than three children per licensed space." The report authored by David Macdonald and Martha Friendly went on to say that "many of the benefits of lower child care fees can only be fully realized if the newly created demand can be met with a much-improved supply of licensed spaces." Creating more spaces will only address one half of the problem however, the other half of the problem is the shortage of staff. A childcare facility is just another empty building if there are no staff to run it. Rural Saskatchewan experiences both sides of the problem. In Wakaw, there are two licensed childcare facilities, the not-for-profit Little Minnows Daycare Centre and the private Brittanee's Cozy Dayhome, which both have extensive waitlists. Other daycares in the vicinity while also having waitlists, spoke to this reporter of staffing difficulties relating to retention and recruitment when contacted for information for the article, "Saskatchewan Parents to See \$10-a-day Childcare" published by the Wakaw Recorder on March 16th. It is not uncommon for Early Childhood Educators (ECE's) to leave the childcare setting for the education system where they can find better pay, better hours, and a benefits package. Another undiscussed drawing feature of being an ECE in the education system is a somewhat higher 'public opinion rating' granted to an ECE working in that setting in comparison to an ECE working in childcare. While the training may be the same, ECE's working in childcare are still often viewed as nothing more than babysitters. Fixing staff shortages will take more than just throwing money at the problem and opening up more training spaces.

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The Not done yet report supports a system built on the model of public schooling, where facilities are located where a specific density of children are located, but this becomes problematic in rural areas where population density is low and, as has been so clearly demonstrated in healthcare, the 'build it and they will come' mentality doesn't work. If parents have to travel long distances to access childcare, it becomes another hurdle to overcome and, in many cases, parents will make the decision that it is just not worth it and instead rely on friends and/or family members.

Region: Saskatchewan ^[3]

Tags: child care deserts ^[4]

CWELCC ^[5]

workforce strategy ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 31 May 2023): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/05/childcare-deserts-and-how-fill-them>

Links

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