

Ontario needs to spend millions for \$10 a day child-care plan to work in Toronto: advocates ^[1]

Many early childhood educators leaving the profession because of low pay

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Excerpts

Ontario needs to step up with millions of dollars in order for the national \$10 a day child-care plan to work in Toronto, say advocates.

A report set to go to city council Wednesday is recommending that Toronto ask the province to step in with millions of additional dollars to make the plan work for children, parents and staff.

In a letter sent to city council on June 13, advocates from the early childhood education sector asked Toronto to call on the province for additional funding toward wages and working conditions of early childhood educators, fee subsidies for underserved families and an expansion of not-for-profit child-care spaces.

Carolyn Ferns, policy coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, is among those who drafted the letter. She says low wages are behind the worker shortage.

"We're promising families access to more affordable childcare, but they won't get access to that if they cannot get a space and they cannot get a space if programs can't staff," said Ferns.

"Many programs across the city are not at capacity right now. They're limiting their enrollment because they cannot staff."

The calls for more funding come despite an announcement by Ontario Education Minister Stephen Lecce last week, who said an increase in wages for early education workers would be coming soon. Lecce did not specify what the wages would be. In 2022, Ontario set a base of \$18 for early education workers in 2022, increasing it \$1 yearly until it reaches \$25.

CBC News reached out to the province for comment, but the government's response did not address the questions that were asked.

Last year, the federal government committed to providing Ontario with \$10.2 billion over a five-year period to bring the average cost of child care to \$10 a day under the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care plan.

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