

I finally feel heard': Educators, parents optimistic after public session on child care in N.L. ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts

ST. JOHN'S, N.L. — In a classroom at the College of the North Atlantic on Prince Philip Drive Thursday evening, June 15, about 30 people gathered to talk about how early learning and childcare could be improved in Newfoundland and Labrador.

It was one of several public consultations the provincial government is doing across the province to get input on an early learning action plan.

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Those gathered at the Thursday session also included parents, non-profit organizations, daycare operators and advocates for improvements to the early learning and childcare system.

Their concerns and ideas were wide-ranging.

One operator said desperate parents have shown up in person at their daycare begging them to take their children. SaltWire has previously reported on the immense difficulty many parents face finding childcare due to a surge in demand after the government made it more affordable, at \$10 per day.

An ECE said if the government wants to improve the situation, it needs to provide more support to ECEs.

A daycare operator talked about how expensive it is to provide infant care specifically, and indicated the expense is a barrier to creating more spaces for infants.

Many people said the current legislation related to early learning and childcare is outdated and not working. They said early childhood education is constantly changing, but the legislation is not keeping pace.

They said ECEs need to be recognized as professionals.

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"It's really important that we know the demand is there — we don't need a parent portal to tell us there's demand. As parents, we all know that demand is there. As providers, we know that demand exists. It doesn't need further research. We need action now."

Patrice Gordon is also involved with Child Care Now, and is an ECE. Gordon said that without quality childcare, other sectors will suffer, so there needs to be better working conditions and benefits for ECEs.

"We need to change the narrative. People need to understand that childcare has changed, it has evolved. It is no longer a passion, it's no longer a vocation only — it is a profession, and we need to be treated as professionals."

The next session will be held in Corner Brook on June 19. There will also be a virtual consultation session, but the details are yet to be announced. Due to demand, a second in-person session was added for St. John's on June 27.

Region: Newfoundland ^[3]

Tags: child care consultation ^[4]

workforce strategy ^[5]

professionalization ^[6]

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Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/06/i-finally-feel-heard%E2%80%99educators-parents-optimistic-after-public> [2]
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