

Dozens of children with autism being dismissed from N.L. daycares due to staff shortages, advocates say ^[1]

Cancellation of inclusion programs forcing parents to decide between leaving their jobs or the province

Author: Gillis, H.

Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 18 Apr 2023

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpts

In January, Kristen Parsons-La Montagne's family was told their three-year-old son, William, would be losing his spot at a St. John's daycare due to a shortage of early childhood educators, leaving them with just a week to find an alternative.

Parsons-La Montagne says they were blindsided.

"We thought everything was going great," Parsons-La Montagne said from her home in Paradise, "and then one day my husband went to pick him up at the daycare and we were advised that he was being discharged due to lack of staffing and resources."

It would be a hurdle for any family: searching for a new daycare amid a child-care crisis in which spots are sparse and wait-lists stretch up to two years.

But for Parsons-La Montagne, the dismissal poses an even bigger challenge.

William has autism, and he sometimes needed help from an inclusion worker at daycare, which makes it even harder to find a daycare to accommodate him, she says.

...

Parsons-La Montagne says they've contacted more than 100 daycares and day homes, tried to hire a nanny, and even flew in her mother for about six weeks to help care for William.

"We found some places that did not have an 18- to 24-month wait-list, but those individuals and those daycares did not accept William on the basis of his diagnosis," she said.

With all avenues exhausted, the family is facing difficult choices: either one of them has to give up their career or they'll need to leave the province they love.

...

It's a story that's familiar to David and Janna-Lynn Pike.

The couple have two children with autism, and their youngest, four-year-old Benjamin was also dismissed from a different Paradise daycare this month.

"It's a very frustrating situation, being told that your son is being let go from daycare because he needs extra support," David said.

...

"The government decided to do \$10 daycare, which, we thought at the time, was great. But it just seems like it just left the whole industry in shambles," David said.

A letter sent to the Pikes by the daycare's administration said that in order to take care of the highest number of children, the daycare has to exclude children with exceptionalities.

...

Dozens of families who have children with autism are facing a similar situation, according to Leah Farrell, an advocacy worker with the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador.

"It's a crisis," Farrell said. "That's a word we don't use lightly. It is definitely a crisis in our community."

Without child care, Farrell said, some families are facing desperate situations.

Related link: C.B.S. family feel young son's daycare dismissal is discriminatory [3]

Child-care report shows N.L. only has enough registered care spaces for 14% of children [4]

Region: Newfoundland [5]

Tags: accommodations [6]

autism [7]

staff shortage [8]

disability [9]

discrimination [10]

inclusion [11]

neurodivergent [12]

system navigation [13]

waitlist [14]

Source URL (modified on 20 Jul 2023): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/07/dozens-children-autism-being-dismissed-nl-daycares-due-staff>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/07/dozens-children-autism-being-dismissed-nl-daycares-due-staff> [2]

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/children-with-autism-exceptionalities-dismissed-from-some-daycares-1.6808114> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/07/cbs-family-feel-young-sons-daycare-dismissal-discriminatory> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/23/05/child-care-report-shows-nl-only-has-enough-registered-care-spaces-14-children> [5]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7851> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9321> [7]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9320> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9187> [9]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8951> [10] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9322> [11]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8952> [12] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9323> [13]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9335> [14] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/waitlist>