

# 'Everybody is panicking': About 300 families told daycare costs will double in two weeks <sup>[1]</sup>

County officials recently sent a notice to the agency that licenses about 50 home daycares in the area, saying it was abruptly ending its contract with the agency under the Canada-wide Early Learning Childcare system.

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

### Excerpts

Some families in Ottawa, Lanark County and beyond say they can no longer afford child care after learning late Friday that their home daycares would no longer receive funding under the \$10-a-day child-care program.

Last week, county officials sent a notice to the agency that licenses about 50 home daycares in Ottawa, Lanark County, Leeds Grenville and Clarence-Russell, saying it was abruptly ending its contract with the agency under the Canada-wide Early Learning Childcare system.

The Canada-wide Early Learning Childcare system subsidizes childcare fees with an aim of bringing the cost down to \$10 a day by 2025. Currently, fees are being reduced by at least 50 per cent. That will end for 300 families in less than two weeks, doubling their daycare expenses.

With just days to go before school begins, the abrupt funding change is causing chaos among families and caregivers. Families say there is already a dire shortage of daycare in the area, including in Carleton Place, which is among the fastest-growing communities in Canada.

Tyler Williams, of Carleton Place, who has two young children in daycare, said he and wife Christina Burkill cannot afford to pay the \$62.50 daily fees for each of their two children in daycare once the subsidies end. They currently pay less than half of that amount. Williams, a videographer who runs his own business, says they are not sure they can both continue to work.

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Kelli Cassidy, executive director of Natural Connections Childcare, the Smiths Falls-based agency in charge of licensing the home daycares affected, said there was little explanation from the county about why the program funding was being cancelled and whether there was anything they could do to change the decision.

Cassidy said the organization underwent compliance and financial audits, which were required under the program, but no concerns were ever brought to their attention.

The notice from Lanark County said the county was terminating its agreement with the agency "for convenience," something it could do with 15 days prior written notice. That means, Cassidy said, the county is able to cancel the contract without cause.

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"They are just absolutely shocked. Some parents have given notice to their childcare providers. There is nowhere for parents to go. I have two providers call saying they may have to close their home (daycares)."

Carleton Place Mayor Toby Randell, who sits on Lanark County council, said the decision was made in camera and because of that he couldn't comment on specifics. He said more information should be coming from the county.

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Parents and providers have complained that the system is poorly organized.

Sarah Bell, one of the daycare providers affected, said she received the email around 5 p.m. Friday, indicating funding under the subsidized daycare program would be cut in less than two weeks. It was her job to break the news to the families whose children she cares for. She immediately thought about those who couldn't afford to pay the fees.

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Williams says Carleton Place has attracted many young families in search of more affordable housing and a quieter life and continues to build new homes, but there isn't the infrastructure, especially daycare, to support families and allow parents to work. Hundreds of children are on a waiting list at the local daycare centre. He says the sudden cancellation of the subsidized daycare program to as many as 400 families will make the situation far worse.

Andrea Hannen, executive director of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario, called the situation extremely concerning.

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Hannen said her organization warned that the \$10-a-day daycare program could actually reduce access to child care in Ontario.

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Ontario was the last province to sign on to the federal government's \$10-a-day childcare program in 2022. The deal was for \$13.2 billion over six years to help families with young children.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** CWELCC <sup>[4]</sup>

family child care <sup>[5]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 29 Aug 2023):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/everybody-panicking-about-300-families-told-daycare-costs-will>

**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/23/08/everybody-panicking-about-300-families-told-daycare-costs-will> <sup>[2]</sup>

<https://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/everybody-is-panicking-lanark-families-told-daycare-costs-will-double-in-two-weeks> <sup>[3]</sup>

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> <sup>[4]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9278> <sup>[5]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8943>