

Higgs government wants to reopen child-care deal with Ottawa ^[1]

Education minister says province needs more flexibility to fund spaces in private, for-profit daycares

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Excerpts

The Higgs government says it needs to renegotiate its 2022 child-care agreement with the federal government to address a long wait list for spaces in the province.

Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Bill Hogan wants more flexibility to allocate some funding to for-profit daycares that would become eligible for subsidized spaces under the deal.

The agreement signed in April 2022 requires the funding to go to designated not-for-profit child-care centres.

...

But Opposition Liberal Leader Susan Holt questioned Hogan's claim that the restriction on funding for-profit daycares was the obstacle.

She pointed to existing centres, such as the Carrefour Beausoleil in Miramichi, that she said are designated, not-for-profit and ready to expand if they can access the funding.

"He can help New Brunswickers today and he's not doing it," Holt said.

Around 3,000 families are on a waiting list for daycare spaces around the province.

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In question period, Holt said the 550 spaces described in the throne speech for this year don't go far enough to address the existing long wait list.

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The five-year federal-provincial agreement is worth \$544 million, with Ottawa paying \$492 million and New Brunswick putting in \$53 million.

The province has also increased wages in the child-care sector, though Green MLA Kevin Arseneau said many workers are still leaving for better salaries as teacher assistants in the public school system.

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