

Alberta parents of children with disabilities say they're running out of daycare options ^[1]

'At some point will one of us have to just stop working because we don't have an option?'

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts

Some families with kids who have disabilities in Alberta say they are having struggles finding daycare.

Colleen Taylor's son Logan is four-years-old and attended a daycare in St. Albert for around three years — until last fall, when the daycare told Taylor that they needed more support to look after Logan.

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There is support for parents like Taylor, in the form of a program called the Family Support for Children with Disabilities program (FSCD).

One of the things a daycare can do is access FSCD funding, which can pay for extra staff to help. It can also pay for medications, counselling, medical supplies, and even clothing or footwear that relates to the child's disability.

However, Taylor said it can be challenging to work with them.

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Province says support is available

In an emailed statement, the province said it does what it can to ensure daycares are inclusive for all children.

"All licensed child-care programs are required by the Early Learning and Child Care Act to demonstrate how they will meet a child's developmental needs, including supporting inclusion for children with extra support needs or disabilities," Heather Barlow, a spokesperson for the Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services said.

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Kerry Coroy is now in a similar situation to Taylor. Coroy's five-year-old son lives with autism and a severe language delay. She said her daycare in Stony Plain also said they needed more support to look after her son, so she too needed to find an alternate solution.

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Shantel Sherwood, one of the co-founders of Hold My Hand Alberta, said she is concerned about potential discrimination.

Hold My Hand is a volunteer organization that helps parents of kids with disabilities.

"Most daycares don't wish to take our children, because they won't unless there's additional supports," she said in an interview.

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