

Nova Scotia still mulling elimination of daycare waitlist fees ^[1]

Some daycares ask families to pay without any guarantee of actually providing child care
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Excerpts

The Nova Scotia government took a stance against waitlist fees for daycares months ago, but it has yet to decide what it will do to stop the practice.

Last fall, Education Minister Becky Druhan directed staff to look at the possibility of eliminating waitlist fees that are charged by some daycare operators to families without any guarantee of actually providing child care.

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The practice is not widespread, but a spokesperson said the department has found "a few centres currently charging waitlist fees." Among them are Kids & Company and the Maritime Muslim Academy, which charge \$200 and \$100, respectively, to add a child's name to their lists.

Working on several options

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Other provinces have addressed waitlist fees through legislation, regulation and other means that include funding agreements with operators.

NDP MLA Lisa Lachance said they'd like to see a centralized waitlist, managed by the province, to take the administrative burden off daycare operators and eliminate the need for waitlist fees.

Lachance said a central list would also help the province better understand demand, and help families better understand their chances of getting a spot.

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Considering a centralized waitlist

Pam Aucoin, executive director of early learning and child care, said a centralized list is under consideration, but she had reservations about how effective it would be.

She said there are about 330 daycare operators across the province, each with its own policies and processes for managing waitlists and registration.

"It is a very significant change across the sector to look to moving to a centralized waitlist management function," Aucoin said.

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