

N.L. announces expanded measures to help child care providers ^[1]

Talks of benefits and pensions for ECEs continuing

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Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 17 Apr 2024

AVAILABILITY

Access Online ^[2]

Excerpts

The Newfoundland and Labrador government has announced more funding for child-care providers offering spaces for infants, as well as other short-term implementations to support the sector.

Education Minister Krista Lynn Howell said Wednesday the province will fund an additional \$30 a day per space for infant care spaces offered by providers participating in the province's operating grant program, which funds regulated child-care centres and some day homes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The need for more infant spaces was one of four main items that came out of a review of the operating grant. Howell said it's one of the areas of highest demand.

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Two other items Howell said could be addressed in the short term are the continuation of two paid leave days for professional development for child-care providers and expanding the number of statutory holidays a provider can receive funding for to 12.

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Howell also announced changes to the funding structure of the operating grant program, saying it will put providers on a more level playing field.

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There are currently 2,206 early childhood learning and child-care spaces in development with various timelines to opening, according to a press release. More than 1,500 spaces for \$10 a day spaces have been created since January 2023.

Pensions and benefits for ECE part of discussions: Howell

Wednesday's announcement comes three weeks after a report from the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour which said 42 per cent of the province's early childhood educators are considering finding a new job because of low wages and a lack of benefits.

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Howell said conversations about pensions and benefits are ongoing.

"That's part of our conversation as we build a workforce and recognize the value that they bring. I think we've moved the dial, but there's still much work to be done," Howell said.

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