

Niagara Region struggling to keep pace with child-care needs ^[1]

The increase for care is driven by lowered rates and a growing population, public health and social services committee hears.

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Excerpts

Niagara Region’s children’s services department fears there still may not be enough child-care services available to meet local needs — despite efforts to add more than 4,000 spaces.

...

He said the federal government-backed Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program has made child care affordable for many Niagara families, reducing fees by more than 52 per cent.

...

He said the Region was allocated an additional 4,067 child-care spaces, primarily to serve priority areas and diverse communities where spaces are needed most — such as for special needs children — and “tremendous progress” has been made to expand the number of spaces to meet general demand.

...

In addition to changes in the provincial government’s funding formula for child care, as well as challenges recruiting registered early childhood educators, limiting the Region to operating at 63 per cent capacity, he said the increased number of child-care spaces may fall short, with a forecast 31 per cent increase in the number of children living in Niagara in the next 20 years.

...

“I’m sure the individuals that are working in that field have heard that their wages were going to increase, which helped probably for them to be around to realize that compensation,” Witteveen said.

...

“Not so long ago, I was on that list and it was years before I got a call,” she said. “I never did get a spot for my kids, which is disappointing.”

...

Related link: Child-care staff and spaces must be increased to meet demand, providers say ^[3]

Region: Ontario ^[4]

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