

How close are we to \$10-a-day childcare?^[1]

Waitlists for childcare continue to grow, though prices at some places have gone down. CTV’s Krista Simpson explains.

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Excerpts

Parents have been eagerly awaiting the national \$10-a-day childcare program but, two years after the announcement, we’re still waiting for that ambitious plan to become a reality.

Providers that signed up for the plan, however, have had a decrease in their childcare costs.

In the Region of Waterloo, rates are now about half of what they were a few years ago. The average is now between \$24 and \$32 a day, depending on the age of the child.

Ontario signed on to the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELLC) plan back in the spring of 2022, promising a gradual rate reduction. The goal was to drop to around \$10-a-day by 2026.

The Ministry of Education said they’re still on track to reach the goal by March 2026.

When CWELCC was initially announced, providers had to opt-in to the program by November 2022. In Waterloo Region, all but three childcare centres signed up.

While some daycares in other communities have warned they may have to close or leave the program to remain sustainable, the director of children’s services for the Region of Waterloo said they’re addressing the challenges.

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Why are there waitlists?

The promise of cheaper childcare means waitlists have grown longer.

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Tips for your childcare search

Finding childcare can feel overwhelming at times, as demand often outweighs what is currently available.

There are, however, some things parents and caregivers can do while they’re waiting to land a spot at a childcare centre.

Don’t be deterred by the waitlist

There may be thousands of names on local childcare waitlists, but that doesn’t mean the parents and caregivers ahead of you will take available openings.

Many childcare operators tell Cardow that when they actually go to fill a spot at their centre, they often have to call names further down the list.

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Sign up early

Parents and caregivers can get on the waitlist for licensed childcare providers by signing up to OneList Waterloo Region.

Expectant parents can also apply using their due date.

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Don’t wait for a call

Once you’re on childcare waitlists, Cardow said it pays to be proactive.

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Be flexible and make a backup plan

Cardow said parents should be as flexible as possible when trying to land a spot.

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Be an advocate

Be your own childcare champion.

Related link: Child-care wait-lists balloon in many Ontario regions amid \$10-a-day program [3]

Region: Ontario [4]

Tags: spaces [5]

waitlists [6]

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