

Teachers suprised by school age change [CA-PE] ^[1]

Prince Edward Island, CBC News

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Teachers on P.E.I. were surprised Thursday to hear the province is moving back eligibility dates for when children can start Grade 1, and are wondering if more teaching resources will be provided.

'It may mean more resource, special ed support.'— Phyllis Horne, P.E.I. Teachers Federation

Phyllis Horne, president of the P.E.I. Teachers Federation, told CBC News Friday the change could put additional pressure on teachers.

"I'm not sure how that will impact class size with those extra children starting school," said Horne.

"It may mean more staffing, more teachers in the classroom, it may mean more resource, special ed support. It may mean that the reading recovery teachers do a great job with students who aren't ready to start reading, and they may need to give a little bit extra support."

About 250 additional Island children will be eligible to start Grade 1 this year. The change affects children turning six in September and October, who will now be able to start Grade 1 if their parents wish.

The new policy is already creating concerns in Island kindergartens, which are struggling to find places for children who until this week weren't going to be starting Grade 1 in September.

...

Parents will want to think carefully about rushing their children into Grade 1, says the superintendent of the Eastern School District.

...

"Often when you see a child who's struggling in school, especially in the behavioural and emotional area, and it's a male, the child is more likely to be born in October, November, December than in January, February, March," said Sandy MacDonald, a child psychologist.

"The other thing I commented on in my own research, and others indicate, that generally speaking at this age the girls are somewhat ahead of the boys in their development."

The province says it made the change to bring P.E.I. more in line with other provinces. It points out that parents make the ultimate decision on when to send their children to school.

- reprinted from CBC News

Region: Prince Edward Island ^[2]

Tags: kindergarten ^[3]

staff ^[4]

Prince Edward Island ^[5]

gender ^[6]

school system ^[7]

school-age ^[8]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/03/teachers-suprised-school-age-change-ca-pe> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7852> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/kindergarten> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/staff> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/prince-edward-island> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/gender> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/school-system> [8]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/school-age>