

# Staff shortages force Calgary day cares to turn babies away [CA]

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Calgary day-care operators forced to turn away parents because of staff shortages have asked the Alberta government for more help attracting workers.

One Calgary day care that had been running for 15 years closed two weeks ago, leaving parents scrambling to find day-care spaces for the fall.

Some Calgary day cares are even refusing to look after babies because they can't find enough staff to work.

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Despite the province's booming population growth, day-care spots in Alberta dropped seven per cent between 1992 and 2004.

In 2004, the province had one day-care spot for every 3.4 mothers with preschool-aged children, according to Statistics Canada.

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Jody Korchinski, a spokeswoman for the Department of Children's Services, said day cares aren't alone in struggling to find workers.

"Alberta's hot economy is having an impact on many businesses, whether or not it's a coffee shop, restaurant or other industries. Alberta day cares aren't unique in the challenges they face attracting and retaining staff."

Alberta has a program to help day cares top up wages of workers and the amounts were increased in October, Korchinski said.

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Dana Barr's maternity leave ends in six months, but she can't find a day-care space for her baby boy. That leaves her with a one-month gap between when her one-year maternity leave ends and her son turns 13 months.

Her mother is planning to fly from Vancouver to help take care of him.

"I am so lucky my mom's offered to come out here for a month, but there's a lot of people out there that don't have that option."

The province is planning public consultations as part of a review of its day-care regulations this fall.

- reprinted from the CBC News

**Region:** Canada [2]

Alberta [3]

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