

Day-care spaces rescued; Region will make up shortfall in federal/provincial funding [CA-ON] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Day-care advocates cheered last night, after persuading regional councillors to change their minds and increase day-care funding.

In a significant about-face, council agreed unanimously to spend an extra \$1.4 million this year, to replace federal and provincial funds lost in the recent cancellation of a national child-care program.

This won't meet all the surging demand. But it maintains 2,600 subsidized day-care spaces for low-income parents through 2006.

...

Day-care operators, parents and labour advocates pleaded with council to maintain day-care spaces, with more local funding.

...

Councillors endorsed extra funding for 2006 knowing it may leave them facing an even bigger shortfall of \$3.1 million in 2007 to maintain the same day-care spaces.

This is equal to a tax increase of about one per cent.

The federal government has withdrawn national funding for child care in order to provide \$1,200 cheques to parents of preschoolers.

The province is putting \$3.3 million more into regional day care this year, but that's not enough new money to maintain 2,600 current spaces.

Partly, this is because almost half of the provincial increase is being spent by regional council to increase day-care salaries, rather than to expand spaces.

Councillors declined last night to roll back these salary supplements.

- reprinted from the Record (Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo)

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