

# Region's child-care stand 'a travesty' [CA-ON] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Regional councillors are playing politics with the lives of children, a child-care advocate says.

Catherine Fife, co-ordinator of the Child Care Action Network of Waterloo Region, said she's disappointed councillors chose to make a political statement against Queen's Park rather than fund local day-care spots.

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At a committee meeting earlier this week, councillors voted to not spend \$1.4 million in operating money to fund child-care spots for low-income families.

The move will reduce the number of children eligible for subsidies to 2,300 from 2,600. Children's services director Mary Parker said that means the region will have to freeze the program until 300 children leave.

Parker said as of August, a waiting list for families seeking subsidized child care will begin. The region hasn't had a waiting list for subsidized day care since 1992.

Fife said all levels of government are battling each other.

The region had expected to get \$11 million over three years from the federal government, but the newly-elected Conservatives eliminated the previous Liberal administration's child-care plan when it was elected in January.

The province chose to split the final federal funding allotment over a four- year period. Waterloo Region received \$3.3 million.

James Ip, spokesperson for Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Children and Youth Services, said municipalities are getting less money since the Conservative government decided to give families a \$1,200 taxable annual allowance for each child up to the age of six.

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Penny Curtis, a supervisor at Emmanuel at Brighton child-care centre in Waterloo, said parents of children with special needs will be in jeopardy of losing their spots because day cares won't be able to afford extra support.

"It's a travesty," she said. "Every child has the right to a good child- care program."

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A final vote will be held Wed., June 28 at the regional building on Frederick Street at 7 p.m. Fife said she will speak as a delegation and is encouraging other child care advocates to do so.

- reprinted from the Waterloo Record

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