

# Region halts plans to expand day care [CA-ON]<sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

Plans to build 12 day-care centres across Waterloo Region that would serve at least 500 children have been frozen because federal cash is no longer available to pay for the program.

The freeze has also stopped future expansion of the region's rapidly expanding day-care subsidy scheme, Mary Parker, regional director of child services, said last night at a day-care panel discussion.

Parker told about 100 people at the meeting organized by Cambridge YWCA that the region spent months developing a plan to build 14 centres. Four would have been in the townships and 10 in Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge.

Now, only two centres -- one in downtown Kitchener, the other in Baden -- are going ahead.

Parker said the loss of more than \$15.5 million in federal money in 2007-08 will result in a lengthy waiting list for day-care subsidies and have a negative impact on numerous programs for children with special needs.

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Other panellists were Jenny Robinson from the national YWCA, Catherine Fife, spokesperson for the region's Child Care Action Network and Marcy Ullerick, a Cambridge mother of three.

Cambridge Conservative MP Gary Goodyear was also at the meeting to answer questions and explain the Conservative plan.

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Ullerick, a Cambridge teacher, said she and her husband have had eight years experience with day-care issues as they struggled to find spaces for their three children aged between four and nine.

She described the search for quality, affordable day care as a "heart and gut-wrenching experience."

Like hundreds of other parents, Ullerick said she had huge difficulty finding day care at high-quality centres where there were long waiting lists. She said parents feel they have won the lottery when allocated a space.

...

- reprinted from the Kitchener, Cambridge and Waterloo Record

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