

Day care deal will still help all N.B. parents: premier [CA-NB]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Premier Bernard Lord said Tuesday a child care deal could be reached with Ottawa in a matter of days or weeks.

Ottawa and New Brunswick have been at a stalemate for weeks in agreeing to who would benefit from a five-year, \$100-million program to improve child care in the province, but Native Affairs Minister Andy Scott said Monday a deal is close.

Mr. Lord said he is sticking to his guns to secure a deal that is good for all New Brunswickers, including stay-at-home parents and parents in rural areas. "We still want more flexibility," Mr. Lord said.

That flexibility could come in a number of forms and stages, he said. He also wanted to clear the air about New Brunswick not having a daycare deal, while other provinces have signed on with Ken Dryden, the federal Minister of Social Development. He pointed out that Ottawa hasn't yet doled out child care money to the provinces that have agreements.

But the premier said he's feeling good about the province's relationship with Ottawa. It turned frosty this summer as the two governments disagreed over child care, Point Lepreau's refurbishment and how gas tax revenues would be distributed to local government. "I am an optimistic person," Mr. Lord said.

- reprinted from the New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal

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