

Day care dollars welcomed [CA-MB]^[1]

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Source: Portage La Prairie (Manitoba)

Format: Article

Publication Date: 18 Jul 2005

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

A provincial government announcement last week saying child care workers will receive an increase in wages as well as new training and education incentives is welcome news for Portage la Prairie day cares.

Janice Delf, executive director of Westend Daycare Centre Inc., said there is now incentive for people to enter the child care profession.

"It will help attract people to the early childhood education field," she said.

Delf said the province also proposes money for attracting child care workers back into the profession who have left because of poor wages.

Delf said her day care could use additional qualified staff.

"We have a real shortage of trained staff," she said, adding the job turnover is high because the pay isn't good.

Delf said people don't pursue the profession because the education costs are high and the pay, when hired, is low.

"The wages should increase to recognize the education needed," she said.

"It's not a cheap course to take," she added, referring to Red River College's early childhood education program.

Lisa Voth, assistant director of Portage Daycare Centre, believes more people will apply for the program after hearing last week's announcement.

Darcey Penner, early childhood educator supervisor at Wee World Daycare Centre, said the announcement was very positive.

"I think it will attract more people," she said, adding it may also bring back those early childhood educators who have left the profession in search of higher paying jobs.

The province's action plan includes an additional \$11.5 million to increase wages and benefits for early childhood educators, to ensure annual salaries of approximately \$27,000 to \$30,000.

As well, funding to recruit and train more educators will be increased this year by about \$3 million. About \$750,000 of this will go towards a recruitment fund to attract qualified staff back to the profession. Approximately \$1.4 million will go towards early childhood education training programs, such as the one at Red River College in Southport. And \$200,000 will be used by students in early childhood education for a tuition support program.

- reprinted from Portage La Prairie

Region: Canada^[2]

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