

Minister hears about francophone daycare challenges in Yukon ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

People in charge of the Yukon's only francophone daycare were given the chance to voice their concerns directly to the man in charge of their funding.

The federal Minister of Social Development Ken Dryden paid a visit to their facility Wednesday morning. For some time administrators at the centre have been trying to draw attention to the unique challenges they face delivering French-only child care in the Yukon.

"We are providing child care in French. We are a minority population. We feel there is a need for money for additional training. We hire from outside. There is no training facility or course available in the Yukon right now to learn to become a good child care worker," said Marc Dionne, who runs the Garderie du Petit Cheval Blanc.

Dionne says the need will only become larger as the Yukon's francophone community grows.

"Right now we're at full capacity. We've got 38 kids, and we expanded last year, and we'll have to expand again because there were about 15 kids born this year in the French community," he said.

Dryden says he understands the problems faced by the francophone daycare and suggested that the \$700 million earmarked by the Liberals for a national daycare strategy may soon be up for grabs.

"As soon as the budget legislation is passed ... then that money flows into a trust for the territory, or for the province, and that money can be drawn upon by the territory or the province almost immediately after that," said Dryden.

For his part, Dionne says he will not let Dryden forget, that he will continue to lobby the minister until new funding and a training program for francophone daycare workers are put in place.

- reprinted from CBC North

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