

Poor families get break on day care [CA-NB] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Low-income families will get a break on day-care expenses thanks to new subsidies from government.

Family and Community Services Minister Tony Huntjens has raised the income threshold for full day-care subsidy from the current \$15,000 to \$22,000.

The daily subsidy has also been boosted from \$18.50 to \$22 per day for children under the age of two, from \$16.50 to \$20 per day for children over the age of two; and from \$9.25 to \$10.75 per day for after-school children. This change also comes into effect on Sept. 1, 2004.

Fredericton's Pre-School Centre board president Bonnie Harvey welcomes the extra money, but says it's not enough to make an impact. She says the province needs to invest in new day-care spaces and better training for child-care workers.

"Unfortunately it's just a drop in the bucket. Day care in New Brunswick has a very poor rating, as far as what quality is offered. The amount of spaces available for pre-school-aged children, and the funding available, as well as the training that is available to have qualified instructors in a day care setting," she says.

A recent child-care report card in a national parenting magazine gave New Brunswick the lowest score for provincial spending and quality of care.

Harvey says New Brunswick families may qualify for subsidies, but that money won't help if there aren't any spaces available for their children.

"New Brunswick is the only province in Canada that has no requirements for training of staff, without qualified staff, you can't get a licenses for daycares. Without licenses there are not going to be any spaces to offer these children." said Harvey.

- reprinted from CBC New Brunswick

Region: New Brunswick ^[2]

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