

Child care is another issue raised by viewers [CA]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

PETER MANSBRIDGE (HOST):

Child care is another issue raised by viewers. Jody Dallaire of Moncton says it's important to her family, crucial is the word she used. Zulekha Nathoo has her story.

ZULEKHA NATHOO (REPORTER):

She works part time and full time at home. Jody Dallaire often worries that juggling work and home means her sons are missing out.

When Dallaire and her husband were both working full time, she could afford daycare. For both kids, it cost about \$12,000 a year. Now with less money coming in, daycare is a luxury.

JODY DALLAIRE (MOTHER, MONCTON):

We'd probably have to make sacrifices. We'd probably have to sell our home and look at a smaller house. We'd have to make changes to our lifestyle.

ZULEKHA NATHOO (REPORTER):

It's one thing being able to afford daycare, but for many families in the region, finding a spot is difficult.

The government is working on subsidizing child care costs for more parents, but what that's doing is increasing demand, not supply. Even if more parents now have access, it doesn't mean there's more space available in daycares. In fact, it only means the waiting lists will get longer.

MARTHA FRIENDLY (CHILDCARE POLICY ANALYST):

New Brunswick in a variety of ways, particularly as far as quality is concerned, is really down at the bottom.

ZULEKHA NATHOO (REPORTER):

Child care researcher Martha Friendly says this province isn't the only one in trouble. Many parts of the country lack accessibility, and subsidies go to low-income families, even though middle class parents can have trouble paying as well. So she says the solution is taking a national approach.

MARTHA FRIENDLY (CHILDCARE POLICY ANALYST):

The money really has to come from the federal government, notwithstanding that this is an area within provincial jurisdiction. The provinces are putting in money, not enough money, but money, and it needs much more public money, and it has to be well directed.

PAUL MARTIN (PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA):

Many young families face real challenges when it comes to finding and affording child care.

ZULEKHA NATHOO (REPORTER):

Last week, Paul Martin pledged \$5 billion over five years to a new national program and his rivals are following suit.

JACK LAYTON (NDP LEADER):

Jack Layton: We're proposing a national child-care strategy that will open up hundreds of thousands of spaces.

ZULEKHA NATHOO (REPORTER):

Meanwhile, the Conservatives says child care is a provincial issue and they propose tax breaks for families instead. But for parents still trying to take care of their children, it's all just rhetoric.

JODY DALLAIRE (MOTHER, MONCTON):

We had to rely on the unlicensed market where my youngest son, he doesn't understand why he can't go to child care daycare anymore, and he misses his program.

- reprinted from CBC The National

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