

Local day care providers lobby for funds [CA-ON]^[1]

Author: Béchar, Melanie

Source: Fort Frances Times

Format: Article

Publication Date: 12 May 2004

AVAILABILITY
See text below.

EXCERPTS

The local Fort Frances Children's Complex Advisory Committee is mobilizing to ensure child care isn't forgotten in the distribution of funds.

The committee held a public meeting here and invited NDP leader and local MPP Howard Hampton to hear their concerns.

"We've reached the breaking point," committee chair Linda Wall stressed to the roughly 20 people on hand at the children's complex Saturday morning.

There currently are 77 children from 57 families on the waiting list for day care services.

"Our waiting lists don't reflect the amount of people who need the service," noted Wall, adding there are families whose work hours simply don't correspond with the day care's hours of operation and so they don't even bother inquiring about spaces.

The problem, she said, is simply a matter of funds.

Despite the government's funding for Ontario Early Years Centres, which includes the Fort Frances Family Resource Program located in the children's complex, this funding "has not created a single extra space in day care," Wall charged.

There are a number of immediate needs to provide quality, affordable, accessible, regulated child care, she noted.

"Funding should reflect the actual cost of child care services," Wall said, adding that costs for insurance, hydro, maintenance, and wages rise annually while funding does not.

Child care subsidies are another important issue. "For people who are unsubsidized, their day care bill is probably higher than most mortgage payments," Wall said.

The committee is calling for an increase in fee subsidy dollars to meet the needs of all families requiring subsidy—both in the programs and on the waiting list.

"Wage subsidy funding is currently based on 1988 calculations," Wall noted.

The committee wants more funding dollars to provide training and support for child care staff and providers, and increased remuneration for licensed private home day care providers.

Perhaps most importantly, child care facilities need timely annualized dollars instead of "one-time" funding.

With funding dollars changing every year, it is difficult for the day care to plan ahead for programs—and families that receive child care today may not be able to stay if funding is cut.

After Wall's presentation, Hampton made a number of comments.

"What has been outlined here by Linda [Wall] is not unique to Fort Frances. Every municipality in Ontario is wrestling with this," he remarked.

From large cities like Toronto to smaller ones like Kenora, the issue of child care is having a profound effect not only on families, but on the province's economy.

"It is starting to cause economic drag," Hampton noted, saying the lack of child care spaces often forces one parent in a two-parent household to leave the workforce—in an economy where it is expected that there are two wage earners in every family.

The ironic thing, Hampton said, was that both the federal and provincial governments already have created programs and initiatives for child care funding.

The federal government has the Early Childhood Development Initiative, of which Ontario should receive \$187 million this year, and the Multilateral Agreement on Child Care, of which Ontario received \$58 million in 2004.

In addition, Ottawa has set aside \$35 million for aboriginal child care programs.

A person on hand for the meeting asked Hampton where all this money went.

"In Ontario, that money has been used to finance tax cuts to people like me who don't need it," he replied, referring to the former Progressive Conservative government's tax cuts for people who earn more than \$100,000 per year.

The best way to ensure that money earmarked for child care gets transferred to municipalities is to speak up, Hampton said.

"If communities don't raise their voices about this, I think the government will back away from it," he said, referring to Premier Dalton McGuinty's election promise to provide an additional \$300 million for child care over the next four years.

Like Wall, Hampton cited the importance of quality child care to a community.

"Investments in child care are some of the best investments we can make," he argued. "For every dollar you spend, you will save eight [dollars] down the road, in 10-15 years" either in education, youth justice, or avoided unemployment later in life.

In related news, Fort Frances Coun. Tannis Drysdale, who attended Saturday's meeting, asked at Monday night's council meeting that councillors each sign and send a Mother's Day card to the Ministry of Finance.

The town passed its new user fee schedule in March, which included increased costs for families using day care.

For residents, the cost of a full day (four hours of more) of child care increased from \$28.95 to \$30.40 for the first child, and from \$17.35 to \$18.20 for the second child. For non-residents, the cost of a full day increased from \$31.95 to \$33.50 for the first child, and from \$19.10 to \$20.20 for the second one.

- reprinted from the Fort Frances Times

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: federalism ^[3]

demand ^[4]

availability ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/05/local-day-care-providers-lobby-funds-ca>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/05/local-day-care-providers-lobby-funds-ca> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federalism> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/demand> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/availability>