

Much-needed child care funds won't help yet, director says [CA-ON]^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Money for child care is finally flowing from the federal government, and Waterloo Region expects to get \$1.6 million of it this year.

Additional funding is expected each year until 2008, the region's community services committee was told this week.

Although Marie Bountrogianni, Ontario's minister of the newly formed Children's Services Ministry, has promised the money will help create "tens of thousands" of new child-care spaces, it won't happen quickly, the regional committee learned.

That's because much of the money will be used to improve a system that has been badly underfunded since 1995. At that time, the previous Progressive Conservative government froze allocations to municipalities, said Mary Parker, director of children's services in the region.

The 28 non-profit regulated child-care centres that receive wage subsidies have had no increase in their subsidies since 1995, Parker said. Improving the wage subsidy will cost about \$1.5 million, she said in an interview.

The first infusion of money to the region is \$400,400 the 2003 allocation that must be spent by March 31. All the non-profit day-care centres can apply for grants to improve health and safety equipment.

Soon to follow will be the 2004 allocation of about \$1.2 million. No spending guidelines have been provided yet.

The money is part of the \$9.7 million coming this year to Ontario from Ottawa. A total of \$352 million is to come to Ontario municipalities over the next three years.

- reprinted the Record

Region: Ontario^[2]

Tags: federalism^[3]

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