

Child care needs money to survive [CA-YK] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The territorial government is using a Yukon Child Care Association survey as an excuse to keep extra money from the group's members.

Members of Yukon's child care community were upset with the new Yukon Party government's 2003-04 budget tabled last Thursday because it did not include any increases to child care in the territory.

During last fall's election campaign, Yukon Party Leader Dennis Fentie promised increases to child care, especially for staff wages.

Yesterday, after question period, Fentie said that immediately after taking office, the new government put someone to work at looking into the problems with child care in the Yukon.

Fentie said the report is still being put together. However, he noted there is an executive summary available but he would not make that summary available to the public.

Health and Social Services Minister Peter Jenkins confirmed that the review was led by Lynn Ogden, the man who ran for the Yukon Party against Liberal Leader Pat Duncan in Porter Creek South.

The premier noted that of the child care people involved in Ogden's review, 84 per cent of them wanted a full review of the territory's child care system.

However, Jasbir Randhawa of the child care association was quick to note that the 84 per cent was not actually from Ogden's review, but a survey of 104 people involved in child care that was conducted by the association itself.

The survey asked people if they wanted to see a review of child care regulations in the territory and 86 of the 104 agreed. Another nine disagreed and eight didn't answer the question.

Fentie said the government needs time to go over Ogden's report, which is why no increases in funding to child care were in the budget. He also noted that time is needed for the full review.

Randhawa said today the government could have put more money into child care without reviewing the regulations.

Regulations and wages are two separate things, she said in an interview. While they are improving the child care, we need some money to survive.

While Fentie said the 84 per cent was in Ogden's report, Randhawa noted that the 84-per-cent figure and the other results of the survey were actually given to Jenkins first at a meeting with the minister and the association. The figures were then given to Ogden.

Randhawa hinted that child care was not the only thing Ogden was working on for the new government.

Fentie said Ogden was contracted by the new government to work on the report.

Randhawa was very disappointed in the Yukon Party's budget. She said that if the party had intended to not put more money in as promised, it should have informed the child care community.

Jenkins noted that people in child care in the Yukon were hoping for something in this budget.

- reprinted from The Whitehorse Star

Region: Yukon Territory ^[2]

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