

Cuts to daycare services to affect 500 Nelson-area families [CA-BC]^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

More than 500 Nelson-area families will be looking for new full-time or part-time daycare services and 30 unionized workers will losing their jobs because of daycare cuts coming March 31.

The West Kootenay Family and Childcare Services board said Thursday afternoon the the provincial government had left it no choice but to cancel six programs.

Local Liberal MLA Blair Suffredine said private sector daycares will take up the slack created by the layoffs and closures.

If the Nelson parents identify a need for more child care service, more people will open up daycares, he said.

But childcare services spokeswoman Kim Adamson said it will be up to parents to let the government now how important quality child care is and how much having trained early childhood educators matters to them.

People working for the childcare services organization need to have early childhood care educators certification, which requires 15 months to two years of training.

Private daycare facilities do not require the same educational prerequisites. Adamson said layoff notices went out Wednesday, after the government would not confirm if it will provide funding beyond March 31.

Suffredine said the government gave child-care organizations a chance to get out of their bargaining agreements, thereby lowering operational costs, when it passed new legislation in the spring.

Wage increases in unionized child care workers collective agreements were going to make the programs uneconomic to run, he said.

The Liberal government has suggested that unionized B.C. child care workers, represented by the B.C. Government and Service Employees Union, had landed a sweetheart deal, Adamson said.

But the deal simply brought employees up to a decent living wage, she said.

The starting wage for a worker with the West Kootenay group is \$16.32 an hour but most work on a part-time basis and are laid off during the summer when school is out, she said.

Adamson said this means workers gross \$21,052 a year before taxes.

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Region: British Columbia^[2]

Tags: subsidy^[3]

funding^[4]

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