

Daycare buckpassing [CA-ON] ^[1]

Editorial

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EXCERPTS

The provincial government has come through with \$18 million to save 8,500 daycare spaces that were about to close because of expiring federal funding. That is good news.

But as welcome as Tuesday's announcement is, the problem has not been solved. The provincial funding is only a reprieve, not a long term solution. And it just maintains the existing number of affordable child care spaces when what is needed is a dramatic expansion, with 15,000 families in Toronto alone on the wait list.

On these bigger issues Ontario's answer remains disappointingly the same: "We continue to call on the federal government to restore funding for child care in Ontario."

Today, Children's Minister Deb Matthews will make this point directly to Human Resources Minister Diane Finley when she meets her to press Ottawa for more social spending.

We wish her luck. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has shown nothing but disdain for daycare and the transformative effect it can have on families. There is nothing to suggest Harper has changed his mind. The province, then, appears to be going through the motions while it waits for a more daycare-friendly government to get elected. With no federal election in sight, that could be a while.

Our neighbouring province has not waited for Ottawa. Quebec charges just \$7 a day for daycare and is pumping hundreds of millions into expansion plans.

...

Help could be on the way, however, in the form of McGuinty's plan to introduce full-day kindergarten. A report on how to implement the plan is now before the government.

Full-day kindergarten would accommodate 4- and 5-year-olds now in daycare for half the day and free up spaces for younger children. That is, as long as money is not taken from the daycare budget to pay for it.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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