

Iglulik needs a daycare [CA-NU] ^[1]

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Author: Nunavut News

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

For more than 10 years, parents in Iglulik have been struggling to open a licensed daycare in their community.

Iglulik, with a population of 1,538 in 2006, is one of the few communities in Nunavut without a licensed daycare.

In 2008, Meeka Nangmalik even walked from Iglulik to Hall Beach and back - 150 km - to raise money and awareness about the need for a daycare in the community.

But the Ajagutaq Daycare Society, which has been the organization lobbying for a daycare since 2007, cannot wring the necessary cash out of the Government of Nunavut to purchase a building and start up a facility.

The problem is that though there are many places to go in the North for money to operate an existing daycare, there is currently no place that will grant you the money to start one.

Daycare start-up money from the Nunavut government only covers the purchase of toys and books and other such supplies, and up to \$5,000 to renovate an existing location. It does nothing to help people build, buy or rent a location - hard to find in overcrowded communities - in which to house these toys, books and the children.

This has left the Ajagutaq society in Iglulik to raise more than \$300,000 on its own to buy and renovate a building that's on offer in the community - and that could take decades' worth of raffles and bake sales. It may take a village to raise a child, but it takes more than a village to raise a child care centre.

Meanwhile, government jobs are going unfilled, teachers are leaving the community, younger mothers can't finish school and older siblings are losing days of school looking after their younger brothers and sisters.

Given that Nunavut's birth rate is the highest in Canada, and that the government loves to talk about improving graduation rates and increasing Inuit employment, this makes no sense.

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Licensed child care centres create local jobs. They allow parents to re-enter the workforce and give children a head start in life.

A 2008 report by Child Care Canada states that about 40 per cent of the money government invests in child care is recouped through the payroll and income taxes of the employed parents, and that daycare produces \$2 of social and economic benefits for every dollar spent on it.

Any plan to improve the social and economic outlook of the territory has to start with child care, and it has to start with Iglulik. That community's families have been waiting far too long.

- reprinted from Nunavut News

Region: Nunavut ^[2]

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