

Child care centres worry about lack of children ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Some child-care centres in P.E.I. say they're worried about their ability to pay the bills next year, when public schools start offering kindergarten.

Kathy Phelan, co-ordinator of the Morell Early Childhood Centre, said her facility - now a mix of kindergarten and preschool children - may be empty for several days every week.

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Phelan said when the full-time kindergarten children leave, her facility may not be able to sustain itself with only preschool children, who attend the centre two or three times a week.

"It's expensive to have a centre like this, because you're not only paying your staff, you're also feeding the children, you're paying rent," said Phelan.

She said other child-care centres in the province expressed similar concerns during a meeting with a government committee looking into how child-care centres will be affected next year.

The cost of kindergarten is paid by the province, while preschool is paid by parents.

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Education and Early Childhood Development Minister Gerard Greenan said several child-care centres have asked for a subsidy. The child-care centre committee is scheduled to issue a final report in May and is expected to address the topic of subsidies.

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