

Subsidy cuts mean fewer daycare spots ^[1]

Author: Monsebraaten, Laurie

Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 8 Feb 2010

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

Some of Toronto's highest-needs neighbourhoods would be the biggest losers if Queen's Park doesn't shore up a child care system facing a triple threat of chronic provincial underfunding, the loss of \$63.5 million in federal money and the impact of all-day kindergarten coming next fall, city data show.

"What we are facing in child care is the perfect storm," said Beaches-East York Councillor Janet Davis, chair of the city's community development and recreation committee.

"If the province doesn't step up in the budget, all the gains we made in the last decade will be lost," she said. "We'll be back to where we were in 1995."

The city oversees Toronto's 56,400-space child care system, including 24,000 subsidized spots. But as reported last month, the city stands to lose 5,000 of those subsidies by 2013. The cuts would be made as children with subsidies leave or "age out" of daycare, starting as soon as this summer.

Since neighbourhoods with the lowest incomes have the most subsidized daycare, they would be the biggest losers, Davis said.

Weston and Jane-Finch, two of Toronto's 13 so-called "priority neighbourhoods" earmarked for increased services and support, would both lose more than 300 child-care subsidies, according to the city's children's services department, which is preparing for the worst.

Across Toronto, about 16,000 children are waiting for subsidies, which are based on family income. There are 629 waiting for subsidy in Ward 12 and 696 in Ward 8.

The full cost of child care runs from about \$17,000 for infants to \$11,000 for preschoolers.

Liberal MPP Laura Albanese's York South-Weston riding (which includes city Wards 11 and 12) faces the biggest subsidy loss in Toronto with 573 spaces in peril.

New provincial fee subsidies for children up to age 4 will help municipalities adjust to all-day kindergarten, she said. But the details are still being worked out.

However, with a \$24.7 billion provincial deficit, Ontario can't afford to replace the federal money, set to expire April 1, she said.

"I know (Children and Youth Minister Laurel Broten) is talking to the federal government and we're calling for them to step up," she said.

Peter Frampton, executive director of the Learning Enrichment Foundation, which runs 18 child-care centres in the Weston and Jane-Finch areas where most families rely on daycare subsidies, said the cuts will be devastating.

"These are families earning between \$22,000 and \$25,000 a year. Without subsidizes I don't know what these parents will do," he said.

Downtown Toronto single mom Ashley Burt, 25, was thrilled when she got a subsidized daycare spot for her 3-year-old son Lucious last year.

But she had to delay plans to attend college last fall because she hasn't been able to get a subsidy for son, Dezmond, 4.

Dezmond is one of 180 children on the waiting list in Ward 19, where 86 subsidies are at risk.

"I'm trying to make something of myself and this has been really hard," said Burt, a former drug addict who was homeless for six years.

The federal money is part of \$252 million in child-care funds Ontario received from Ottawa in 2006 when the Harper government cancelled a previous \$5 billion national child care plan. Instead of spending all the money that year, Ontario spread it over four years to support about 7,600 new child-care subsidies. The last \$63.5 million instalment runs out April 1.

....

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: poverty ^[3]
funding ^[4]
federalism ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/02/subsidy-cuts-mean-fewer-daycare-spots>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/02/subsidy-cuts-mean-fewer-daycare-spots> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federalism>