

Waiting list frustrating^[1]

Couple waits for years for daycare space

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AVAILABILITY

See text below

EXCERPTS

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Lack of day care is one of several frustrations Hassan Saad has experienced since moving to Saskatoon from Russia.

Saad, who came to Saskatoon as a refugee with his wife, Liza, in 2005, says he is frustrated about the lack of support he's received from the government to help his transition into the country. Instead of feeling supported, he feels hindered by the extensive waiting lists and immigration legalities he's encountered since arriving in Canada.

"When we left Moscow . . . there was no waiting lists. Here we have to go on waiting lists for day care, to see a doctor . . . to make an appointment for anything, it seems there is a wait list. Canada is a rich country, not a poor country. The government should look at these waiting lists," he said.

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The couple applied at the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union Childcare Centre for a day-care space and was on the wait list for two years. They gradually added their names to seven other day-care wait lists, which they have been on from six months to one year with no results.

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Liza is supporting the couple financially by working as a care aid worker. She is unable to practise medicine because she must pass several accreditation exams to be a licensed family physician in Canada.

Hassan spent a semester at SIAST Kelsey campus, receiving a Governor General's bronze medal for academic achievement. He is attending the University of Saskatchewan and is in his third year of a biochemistry degree. He has applied to the faculty of pharmacy and is hoping to be accepted for the next academic year.

He said it's difficult coming home from a full day of classes and finding his wife sleeping in bed, exhausted from taking care of the child all day.

"Before the baby was born I received a Governor General award because of my good average. Now that the baby is born, my wife is always tired and I've had to take less classes to help her. I took three classes this semester and I even found that difficult because my wife is so totally exhausted."

Last week, the couple was finally accepted into the USSU Childcare Centre after their two-year wait. Hassan says he feels lucky to get in because it's close to school and he knows many others are still waiting.

Still, he feels frustrated they had to wait so long before they could receive help with child care.

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-reprinted from the StarPhoenix

Region: Saskatchewan^[2]

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