

# Cancelled school daycare frustrates families <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

When one Kanata woman learned the extended daycare program was cancelled at Glen Cairn Public School, she considered switching her daughter to a Catholic school -- only to learn it was cancelled there, too.

"It's very difficult. My husband and I have to figure out what we are going to do," said the woman, who asked that her name not be published.

"Anne" said she's been pressing school and board staff for a firm answer on whether the program would go ahead since May, but didn't receive a letter definitely saying it would not run at Glen Cairn until July.

The program, which provides on-site child care before and after school for a daily fee, has been cancelled at most of the Ottawa schools introducing full-day kindergarten in the fall. Only five Catholic schools out of 12 and five public schools out of 22 introducing full-day kindergarten are offering the extended day program in both the morning and the afternoon.

The Ontario government originally announced every school offering full-day kindergarten would also offer the extended daycare program, but changed its policy, saying schools that didn't have enough children registered weren't required to offer it.

Anne said she was ecstatic when she first heard about the extended day program. According to the McGuinty government, the program was designed to benefit parents just like her -- a working mom concerned about how she was going to balance her job and getting her daughter to and from school.

But in May, Anne said Glen Cairn staff started suggesting they might not know until early September whether the program would go ahead or not. That's when she got worried.

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So Anne started exploring other options -- and found out her troubles don't end there.

The school bus zone maps have been changed for the coming school year, and the daycare provider who has been looking after Anne's daughter, from whose house she'd be heading to school, lives slightly outside the bus pick-up zone for Glen Cairn.

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Julian Hanlon, director of education at the Catholic school board, said no parents have complained because schools made sure they understood the program was never a sure thing. "There have been no issues with it at all. The parents understood it was tentative and it was based on numbers."

Anne said she bombarded school staff and board trustees with e-mails, asking for more information about how many parents had expressed interest and how many they needed to go ahead with the program. She said she was told only about half of the 20 parents required to run the program at Glen Cairn had signed up, even though registration had been opened up to older grades.

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Anne said she's frustrated with how difficult it's been to get firm answers about whether the program will go ahead and how many parents signed up for it.

"I just found it hard to believe that there wasn't the interest there."

- reprinted from the Ottawa Citizen

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** kindergarten <sup>[3]</sup>

demand <sup>[4]</sup>

full-day early learning <sup>[5]</sup>

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