

# 1-day strike shuts Que. home daycares <sup>[1]</sup>

workers hold demonstrations across province as contract negotiations continue

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## EXCERPTS

Thousands of parents in Quebec were scrambling to make child-care arrangements Wednesday as 13,000 home-based daycare operators went on strike for the day.

The walk-out comes in spite of a last-minute appeal by Quebec Family Minister Yolande James to the Quebec labour federation (Centrale des syndicats du Québec, CSQ) to hold off on any job action as negotiations continue for a first collective agreement.

However, a union spokesperson said the two sides are still far from a deal.

With their daycares closed, workers flocked to morning rallies across the province including outside of the Montreal office of Premier Jean Charest.

More than 200 daycare providers marched along the busy downtown sidewalk holding signs declaring, "We are responsible, we deserve better."

An estimated 90,000 children attend the affected daycares, including the toddler-aged son of Montreal mother Arlene Labelle.

She took time off during a half-day walkout held two weeks ago, but said she didn't have the option for Wednesday's strike.

"I have to go to an absolutely very important meeting that I can't miss, so my father-in-law is going to come and look after the baby," she told CBC News. "It's a bit of a scramble, but we'll have to make it work."

Labelle said shuffling things around will become increasingly difficult the longer the dispute drags on. She hopes there will be a settlement soon, for the sake of parents and daycare providers alike.

"You know when an employee or a person at work is not happy, their morale isn't good. That can't be really optimal for taking care of our children," she said.

Union wants better wages, pension plan

Government-subsidized home daycare workers received the right to unionize in June 2009 when the Quebec government passed Bill 51. However, they are still considered to be independent workers.

The CSQ wants secured paid vacations, a pension plan and better salaries.

According to the union, home-based daycare workers receive \$19 a day per child in provincial subsidies plus and another \$7 from parents.

The union is asking the government for \$13 more per child per day.

Another 2,000 home-based daycare operators in Quebec are affiliated with the Quebec Federation of Labour, another union umbrella group. They are holding their own contract talks with the government.

Unsubsidized home-based daycares were not affected by the job action.

-reprinted from CBC news

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