

Alberta day-care expansion program closes, but subsidies will continue: minister ^[1]

Author: Ferguson, Eva

Source: Calgary Herald

Format: Article

Publication Date: 23 Feb 2011

EXCERPTS

A provincial government program creating more than 18,000 new child-care spaces across Alberta has ended, sparking fear among some day-care advocates that too many centres are still struggling with long waiting lists.

The Creating Child Care Choices plan provided \$250 million in provincial funding during the last three years, allowing many operators to increase child-care space, fund building expansions and hire additional staff.

But now that the original goal of creating some 14,000 spaces has been exceeded, Yvonne Fritz, minister of children and youth services, says the department's focus will shift to just maintaining the more than 90,000 child-care spaces that now exist.

"Now that we've accomplished what we set out to do, we have to sustain it," said Fritz, explaining that that means continued funding to help day cares with subsidies, staffing and operating costs.

With the provincial Conservatives set to unveil the Alberta budget Thursday, Fritz said she couldn't detail how much would be spent over the next year to sustain the new spaces.

But child-care advocates with Public Interest Alberta say after last year's \$7.5-million budget cut to children's services, day-care centres with waiting lists won't get much more help.

"Call any good child-care centre and they have huge waiting lists, because of underfunding of child care," said executive director Bill Moore-Kilgannon.

"And as the province prepares for the budget, they'll be looking for further cuts."

Tanya Szarko, executive director with the Bow Valley Child Care Centre in downtown Calgary, says her centre does have a waiting list for infant care.

But she added that government funding was able to allow Bow Valley to add 14 new spaces during the last year, reconfiguring rooms and adding more equipment.

....

But Moore-Kilgannon says Alberta is experiencing a baby boom, and continues to grow at a fast pace.

"Has the government done a detailed review of the increasing demand for spaces and looked at which communities need additional quality child-care spaces?"

Fritz says the province does continue to monitor community needs, keeping in contact with day-care operators, schools, community associations and municipalities throughout Alberta.

"We'll continue to support daycare operators with wage top-ups, subsidies to help low-income families and we'll work closely with them to monitor demand."

- reprinted from the Calgary Herald

Related link: Public Interest Alberta press release: "Alberta's child care system still struggling" ^[2]

Region: Alberta ^[3]

Tags: accessibility ^[4]

spaces ^[5]

demand ^[6]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/02/alberta-day-care-expansion-program-closes-subsidies-will-continue>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/02/alberta-day-care-expansion-program-closes-subsidies-will-continue> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/02/albertas-child-care-system-still-struggling> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7859> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/accessibility> [5]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/demand>