

Daycares question new funding ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The people who run daycares in Manitoba are still trying to sort out a big promise in this week's provincial budget.

The NDP government promised 2,100 new daycare spaces - but not all the funding is all that new. Plus, some existing child care centres are still waiting for money, just to keep operating.

The \$4-million announcement was pledged to create thousands of new spaces but Family Services Minister Gord Mackintosh admitted Wednesday that he is unsure exactly how many that will be.

"The majority of those newly-funded spaces will be newly-created. Others are going to pay for spaces that childcare centres have had there, but don't have any provincial funding," he said.

Mackintosh said an announcement is coming later this week with more details on incentives for ECE workers.

"Whether existing spaces get some of that funding is a huge question for us," said Carol Jones, the director of the St. Germain Daycare.

The daycare in St. Vital has a wait list hundreds of children long, most of whom are school aged and need before and after school care.

Facing the overwhelming need last year, the Jones went ahead and opened a new childcare facility with 20 spaces for kids between the ages of 6 and 12 - without financial assistance from the government.

"Our school age site has been operating without funding for a year and if we don't get funding soon it will be in jeopardy," Jones said.

It is one of almost 1,700 child care facilities throughout the province that are still waiting for additional funding.

Provincial officials say in addition to the 2,100 new daycare and nursery spaces that have been promised, existing facilities will get a one per cent increase in their operating grants.

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