

# Child care spaces in high demand across province <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** CTV Saskatoon

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 19 May 2011

## EXCERPTS

More than 500 child care spaces will open across the province in the coming months. It's part of a \$2.1 million commitment from the Government of Saskatchewan. While it might sound like a significant boost, it still falls short of providing enough spaces to keep up with demand.

In Prince Albert, some parents are faced with growing waitlists, and have had to scale back their hours outside of the house. Colleen McCrae is a Prince Albert mother who plans on going back to work once her maternity leave is up, but she says that would be impossible without child care for her daughters.

"It's hard, especially once both of them are in," says McCrae. "Some days it doesn't even seem worth it to be working because daycare is expensive, but it is worth it."

There were over 15,000 births in Saskatchewan last year. With a rapidly growing population and more young families moving to urban centres, longer wait times and higher costs are both a nightmare and a reality for expectant parents.

Demand for child care providers in Prince Albert continues to rise, and the province is taking note. It's funding 31 new childcare spaces in the city. The doors to the new facility at St. Anne elementary school have yet to open and yet all 31 spots are filled.

A pre-school space alone at the new St. Anne facility cost parents \$470 a month. Program Director Gail Szautner already runs three daycares in the city -- all with lengthy waiting lists.

"People put their names on our waiting list when they find out they're pregnant because they know that it's going to take two years or more before they're able to get in and we unfortunately, have had several families who have waiting that two or three years," says Szautner.

Currently, the waiting list for St. Anne is only accepting children 18 months or older.

- reprinted from CTV Saskatoon

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

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

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