

Full-day kindergarten a necessity; Half-day public school system leads family to enroll daughter in private school ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

CORNER BROOK - Mike Jackson says all-day kindergarten is not just a want, but a necessity.

Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province in Canada without a full day of classes for five-year-old students entering the school system. For how much longer? That is unclear.

Although not revealing a lot of detail about it, the provincial government is currently studying the idea of expanding kindergarten to a full day. NDP Leader Lorraine Michael has committed to making the change as part of her election platform.

Jackson of Corner Brook feels so strongly about the need for full-day kindergarten that he enrolled his five-year-old daughter Emily in classes at Immaculate Heart of Mary, a private school, this year.

"The days of \$50,000 dollar mortgages and mom's staying home to care for their children are long gone," Jackson said.

"In order to provide for your family today, like our parents did for us in the past, both parents need to be employed."

He said there is a lack of available daycare spaces, despite the need for full-time daycare services. He said parents must find full-day care for toddlers, then all of a sudden it changes to half days while they are in kindergarten.

"Not all of us are in the position to seek the assistance of our families to fill that gap, and the idea of picking up your child at lunchtime and taking them to either daycare or school is not always an option," he said.

Mike and his wife Janet, who also have a two-year-old child, are both employed and are not guaranteed opportunities to leave work for lunch.

"Half days add unnecessary disruptions to a young family's already busy lives," he said. "This disruption gets even worse when, one week your child goes to kindergarten in the morning and the next week it is in the afternoon."

Jackson also believes in the developmental benefits of full-time daycare and all-day Kindergarten. He also expects it would be an easy transition for his children.

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Jackson hopes all-day kindergarten is implemented by the time his son Ryan attends school. Although, happy with the results of Emily being in full-time junior kindergarten and kindergarten at the private school, he said she will return to the regular school system after this year.

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