Ford calls on Queen's Park to pay for daycare [1]

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EXCERPTS:

Toronto mayor Rob Ford has waded into the provincial election campaign, calling on Queen's Park to pay for 2,000 subsidized childcare spaces that he said the city could no longer afford.

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Mr. Ford previously raised the same issue in a meeting with Mr. McGuinty, the Liberal Party Leader. This week, city manager Joe Pennachetti listed the daycare program among his recommended budget cuts.

Mr. McGuinty said he has no plan to kick in money for the program.

"We have not made that commitment, and in fact, we will not be making that commitment," he told reporters.

He poured cold water on Mr. Ford's demand, saying that the Liberals have done more than their share on childcare in Toronto by honouring a commitment to fund daycare spaces after the Conservative government withdrew its support for a national program in 2006.

He also said his government's full-day kindergarten program has freed childcare spaces because 4- and 5-year-olds are now in school all day.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath, meanwhile, has pledged to funnel $125-million per year for two years to cities for daycare facilities.

"This is a problem: We're losing childcare spaces; fees are going up," she said. "So that $125-million each of the next two years is going to stabilize by preventing spaces from closing and preventing childcare fees from increasing."

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