

Ban bilingual daycares, watchdog urges ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

New Brunswick's official languages commissioner is calling on the provincial government to ban bilingual daycares by extending the policy of duality that currently covers the education system.

Michel Carrier said in his annual report that was released on Thursday the same rules that divide kindergarten to Grade 12 into French and English systems in New Brunswick should also apply to daycares.

Carrier said experts have told him that in a bilingual daycare, French preschoolers tend to lose their French and learn English instead. He said that makes it harder for them once they get to French school.

"The French school system are facing challenges in accepting students whose ability to understand and speak French is not all that great," he said.

Carrier said he's raising this issue because the province is considering proclaiming the Early Learning and Childcare Act. The act would allow bilingual instruction for preschoolers at daycares.

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Carrier said a lot of francophones are worried about the growing number of bilingual daycares.

"It should be remembered that bilingual settings often spell assimilation for members of minority communities," the commissioner's report said.

"This is also why New Brunswick has two public school systems, one for francophones and one for anglophones."

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In Moncton, an officially bilingual city where an estimated 40 per cent of the population speak both English and French, bilingual daycares are common.

Linda Babineau, who runs Garderie A Plus daycare, said a bilingual daycare hasn't hurt her children.

"My children are French and they've been with English children all their lives at daycare and around our neighbourhood and they haven't lost their French language at all," Babineau said.

Babineau said the earlier children learn both languages the better.

Carrier said it should be up to the school districts not daycares to decide how best to offer second language instruction.

-reprinted from CBC news

Region: New Brunswick ^[2]

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