

# Private daycares may be forced to close: Operators not allowed to apply for 15,000 new subsidized spots <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

Owners of private daycares fear they might be forced to close if the status quo remains with Quebec's subsidized daycare program.

"If there are other installations that offer \$7 daycare, people will go there," said Priscilla Boily, who runs a private daycare in Terrebonne.

"I know of at least 100 places that would close in the 450 area code."

Boily is part of a newly formed coalition of private daycare operators who are incensed that they cannot apply for the thousands of new subsidized spots the Liberal government has promised to create.

"We have to have the same norms, the same regulations, and yet we get no government money. What we want is equality for parents."

This week, the association of private daycare operators sounded the alarm that the system is deeply flawed, a week after Quebec's auditor-general had stern words about the process of awarding new daycare spots.

At stake is the subsidy of \$52.55 a day for children under 17 months and \$35 a day for those 18 to 59 months. Parents pay \$7.

The cost of having a child in a private non-subsidized daycare can run \$35 to \$40 a day, with a complicated tax refund based on family income.

In 2008, the Liberals announced they would create 18,000 new spots in \$7 daycare.

How and to whom those spots were allocated has created a lot of animosity and finger pointing amid accusations of favouritism and influence peddling.

Now, two non-subsidized private daycare groups are mobilizing against the government's plan to exclude them again from the 15,000 spots expected to open in the next four years.

The groups are the Alliance des garderies privées non subventionnées and the Coalition des garderies privées non subventionnées du Québec.

They are circulating a petition and plan a demonstration at the offices of the provincial department of families next week.

The current system creates different classes of daycare, the organizations argue, and they want Family Minister Yolande James to legislate equity among the three kinds of daycare offered to parents.

Geneviève Hinse, assistant to James, said the minister's mandate was always clear - to create new daycare spots and not just transfer those existing in private facilities.

"The No. 1 criteria for deciding the distribution of the spots was where are the needs," Hinse said. "If there were no demands in Montreal, we wouldn't create new spots - but there are."

Hinse said the minister has met with the Coalition des garderies privées non subventionnées.

"We are aware of the problems they face, but the door is closed to them for applying for spots."

-reprinted from the Montreal Gazette

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

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

privatization <sup>[4]</sup>

subsidy <sup>[5]</sup>

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