

Kenora to vote on getting rid of city-run daycare: Daycare is a service the province should be providing, says Kenora Mayor Dave Canfield ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

The city of Kenora is considering dropping the day care business - a proposition that would cost 17 workers their jobs and leave some parents scrambling for other child-care options.

Council is looking at shutting down the Castle of Learning Children's Discovery Centre and the city's after-school programs.

Kenora currently provides either full-day or after-school child care for more than 200 children, but it's a service Mayor Dave Canfield said the province should be providing. With full-day kindergarten coming to Ontario next year, Canfield said there will be less of a need for city-run services.

But that hasn't stopped the emails and phone calls he has received from upset parents. "I mean it pulls at your heartstrings and none of us are immune to that," Canfield said.

"It's one of [those] things where we have to decide whether we're in this business or not and we have to decide if this is going to be coming under the Ministry of Education."

For Shannon Bailey, whose two year old daughter has been in full-time day care in Kenora for a year, the pending change puts her in a difficult spot.

She said waiting lists at private day cares are already pages long, and that it could take up to 18 months to get a spot.

"I'll be put in a position where I have to choose between being in the workforce and being at home with my child," Bailey said. "Obviously, my first preference would be being at home with my child if that was affordable to us, but both my husband and I need to be participating in the workforce."

Canfield said he believes other day care providers in the city will step up to offer spaces.

"Will there still be waiting lists? There always is and there always has been, even with our [programs]," he said.

Canfield said getting out of the daycare business means the city will save about \$75,000. But he said the prime motivation for the change is to streamline city services and transfer them where they belong.

It's a familiar refrain for Carole Bruneau, the vice president of CUPE Local 191 which represents the child care workers. She was involved in a campaign to save city-run day care programs in 2003, when there was a proposal to shut them down. She's hopeful they can be successful again.

"Day care actually provides a service to all businesses because their workers can come to work instead of staying home, looking after children," Bruneau said.

"The employer is ... pulling the rug out [from under] the feet of our citizens and our families. They still require time, we need time to negotiate with other day care providers."

Kenora council will vote on the decision on Monday. If it goes through, city-run daycare would end effective January 1, 2013.

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Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: spaces ^[3]

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Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/12/08/kenora-vote-getting-rid-city-run-daycare-daycare-service-province> [2]

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