

Private daycares plead for Quebec subsidies ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

A Quebec coalition of private daycare centres says the provincial government's plan to create 28,000 new subsidized public spaces over the next few years is a waste of taxpayers' money.

The coalition says close to 30 per cent of the spaces in their members' daycare centres are available right now, but parents balk at having to pay 33 to 35 dollars per day for unsubsidized daycare.

Many parents paying the full rate now are on waiting lists for a subsidized space, at seven dollars a day.

The coalition is calling on the government to subsidize its members' daycare centres, so that they can offer their clients the seven dollar a day fee.

They say without the subsidies, the government could drive them out of business.

"It scares me. It saddens me," said Marie Pounardjian, who runs a daycare called Mariko in Laval. "We give our love, our hearts, our patience to these kids. We have created something beautiful, and we want to keep it."

Asked about the issue on Sunday, Premier Pauline Marois told the hosts of the popular French-language television program *Tout le Monde en Parle* that subsidizing more private daycare centres would not create a single additional space.

Marois said the private daycare centres are already full.

However, the coalition insists the premier has her facts wrong.

Pounardjian said she has 17 openings at her centre alone.

The coalition argues the government's plan is illogical and wasteful, as it would cost taxpayers much more money to construct new early childhood education centres than it would to subsidize existing, albeit private centres.

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Region: Quebec ^[2]

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