

Quebec daycares threaten to close over cuts ^[1]

Author: Derfel, Aaron

Source: Montreal Gazette

Format: Article

Publication Date: 16 Mar 2013

EXCERPTS:

MONTREAL - Quebec's daycare operators are threatening to close their centres in a "day of protest" against \$56 million in planned cutbacks announced on Thursday, only months after Family Minister Nicole Léger pledged to expand the daycare system.

"We're not going to take this sitting down. We can't," Gina Gasparrini, spokesperson for the Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance, said in an interview Saturday.

"If these cuts get applied, the CPEs (public daycares) will shut down. We're going to go bankrupt."

On Monday, the association's leaders will be planning a series of pressure tactics to fight the cuts.

"Closing the daycares in protest is definitely an option that's on the table," added Gasparrini, who runs a daycare in Côte-des-Neiges.

Léger met with the daycare association on March 14 to confirm the cuts as part of a plan to balance the government's budget. Léger told the association that Quebec will chop \$37.9 million from the CPE's budget as of July 1. An additional \$18.3 million will be plucked from the subsidies given to private daycares.

"We have to remember that the family ministry also has to comply with budgetary efforts - all ministries have to - to counter the \$1.6-billion deficit left behind by the previous Liberal government," Léger told reporters.

Premier Pauline Marois promised a 3.2-per-cent increase in spending in Legér's department in the budget last fall. In November, the government announced it would add 28,000 daycare spots by 2016.

"It's quite infuriating," Gasparrini said. "We had met with the government just a couple of months ago to express our concern because more than half of our CPEs are already running deficits, and they were promising us that there would be no cuts, and then we're told that there are \$56 million in cuts."

In Gasparrini's case, her daycare will be deprived of \$50,000 in subsidies. She said she doesn't know where she'll find the money because all the major expenses - rent, food and union salaries - are already budgeted.

Compounding the problem is the minister's decision to raid the emergency funds of daycares - used to repair leaky roofs, among other things - by a total of \$6.6 million.

"We won't have emergency funds if something happens and then at the end of the year we'll be running deficits," Gasparrini said. "It's a double whammy."

In 2006, Marois denounced \$50 million in cutbacks to the daycare system under Premier Jean Charest's government.

Jeff Begley, president of the Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux (FSSS-CSN), the union representing 9,000 daycare workers, is urging a meeting with Léger to persuade her to reconsider the cuts.

"The government is completely contradicting its daycare policy with these cuts," Begley said. "We've already made compromises in our last collective agreement a year ago."

Begley cited a study showing for every dollar the government invests in daycares, the economy reaps \$1.04 in benefits.

"We're worried that if these cuts go through, some daycares will have to close," Begley said.

-reprinted from the Montreal Gazette

Region: Quebec ^[2]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/03/quebec-daycares-threaten-close-over-cuts>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/03/quebec-daycares-threaten-close-over-cuts> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7855>