

Quebec government, CPEs reach agreement on cuts: Minister confirms financing of \$7-a-day system to be reviewed ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Quebec's provincial government has reached a deal with the association representing not-for-profit subsidized daycares and the cuts aren't as deep as anticipated.

The agreement, reached Thursday, abandons the government's initial plan to expand the number of children per educator or reductions in per-child funding for four-year-olds.

The government will instead use surpluses generated by some of the CPEs to help find \$31 million in savings.

CPEs are allowed to accumulate 25 per cent of their turnover as surplus, according to government guidelines.

That surplus is typically used to help maintain buildings and set up installations.

Gina Gasparrini, spokeswoman for the Quebec's association of publicly-funded daycares, said the agreement is a welcome relief for CPEs that were facing cuts that would have had a significant impact on future operations.

"They were very painful because they would affect us long-term," she said.

"They were permanent. When we change how we finance each child, that's a permanent change. Whereas this way it's going to be a one-time deal and we're still going to be able to pay all our bills at the end of the year."

Gasparrini says daycares' day-to-day operations will not be affected under the new agreement.

Family Minister Nicole Léger said the agreement meets the objectives of the 2013-2014 budget.

She is expected to meet with representatives from private daycares soon.

They are facing a nearly \$15 million cut in government subsidies.

\$7-a-day program to cost more?

Despite a promise during the last election campaign to freeze the rate of the province's subsidized daycare program at \$7-a-day, the minister confirmed the government will be reviewing the financing of the system.

The government will continue talks with the CPEs to ensure their "sustainability and optimization," she said in a statement.

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