

Overhauled childcare plan heads to council for approval ^[1]

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Source: Ottawa Citizen

Format: Article

Publication Date: 20 Feb 2014

ECERPTS:

The proposed childcare plan that would overhaul the way the city subsidizes daycare is heading to city council after passing committee on Thursday.

The city's community and protective services committee approved the plan, which is designed to help the city navigate through provincial changes to early child care, most notably the shift to full-day kindergarten.

The biggest change is a proposal to eventually attach daycare subsidies to children, as opposed to attaching them to daycare centres.

Currently, parents only find out whether they are eligible for a subsidized spot after one opens up. Under the new system, parents would find out whether they qualify before being placed on the wait-list.

The city says subsidizing children instead of spots will ensure the most vulnerable children receive the subsidies they need.

The demand for subsidized childcare spaces in Ottawa has more than doubled since 2010, but the number of subsidized spaces has decreased slightly. The city funds 20 per cent of the cost of subsidizing daycare; the rest is paid for by the province.

The city can currently subsidize 6,500 daycare spots. More than 5,100 children of the nearly 13,000 on the current daycare registry list are requesting a subsidy.

The first step in the city's plan is the launch, by September, of a new wait-list management system.

New purchase-of-service contracts with childcare providers will be developed by the following year, according to the plan.

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