

More \$7-a-day spots but not enough to go around: West Island daycare operators ^[1]

Author: Cornacchia, Cheryl

Source: Montreal Gazette

Format: Article

Publication Date: 18 Mar 2014

EXCERPTS:

Finding a \$7-a-day daycare spot is tough and it's unlikely it will get much easier even after the provincial government implements its plan to bolster the Quebec daycare network, including in the West Island.

On March 4, Quebec family minister Nicole Léger announced 2,871 new places will be added to the Montreal network of CPEs (Centre de la Petite Enfance) and garderies, including about 250 spots in Dollard-des-Ormeaux, Baie-d'Urfé, Ste-Geneviève and Dorval.

But the verdict from operators of several of the daycare centres that are now finalizing details, which will pave the way for many of the new daycare places, is that they stop well short of meeting needs of West Island parents.

New \$7-a-day spots are going to four CPEs and two garderies, for-profit daycare centres where only some spots are \$7-a-day, and those West Island daycare centres already have waiting lists at least tenfold the number of new places being made available.

"It's crazy," said Sara Maiorana, the director of Centre de la Petite Enfance Les Bois Verts in Dollard-des-Ormeaux. "The demand on the West Island is go great."

"This is hardly going to make a dent," said Maiorana.

Maiorana said she has been notified that CPE Les Bois Verts will be getting 80 places for a new facility that is yet-to-be-built.

But, she explained, there are already more than 600 names on her waiting list and, as per common daycare policy, openings go to parents who are already on the list and those with siblings already enrolled at the centre go to the front of the line.

"It's almost like winning a lottery," concurred Linda Lemusier, director of CPE Les Micropuces, a workplace-based daycare in Dorval that has been granted an additional four spots.

"Your child needs to be the right age at the right time for the opening that comes up," said Lemusier. "It's tough."

The new spots are part of a broader plan to expand Quebec's subsidized daycare network by another 15,000 spots by 2016 and first announced by the provincial government last winter.

West Island parents, many of whom have languished on waiting lists for months, if not years, initially welcomed the announcement. The news quickly made the rounds on West Island blogs, Twitter feeds and Facebook pages among them Moms Near Me and Mamaécolo, both geared toward young families.

But by late last week, much of that early excitement had waned as many of those parents had by then made phone calls only to find out they were no further ahead than they had been before the new spots were announced.

Waiting lists are not the only factors. Many of the new spots will not be available for up to 18 to 24 months as some of the daycare facilities where the new places will eventually be available require renovations and expansions.

For example, both CPE Taylor Whiteside in Baie-d'Urfé and CPE Les Bois Verts in Dollard, the two West Island centres granted the largest number of new places, have yet to finalize various agreements involving municipal land transfers and provincial funding for their campuses.

"We would like to do it as fast as possible," said Michelle Sauvé, the director of the CPE Taylor Whiteside. "The need is phenomenal out there. I have 900 names on my waiting list."

But like other West Island daycare operators, she said, at the moment, she can only tell parents their names are on the waiting list.

-reprinted from the Montreal Gazette

Region: Quebec ^[2]

Tags: funding ^[3]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/03/more-7-day-spots-not-enough-go-around-west-island-daycare-operators> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7855> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding>