

Quebec daycare workers stage 1 day walkout ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Parents of more than 90,000 kids in Quebec had to make alternate arrangements Monday as the province's subsidized home daycare workers staged a one-day strike in their demand for better pay.

Nearly 14,000 members of the FIPEQ union representing daycare workers hoisted picket signs on Monday, more than seven months after their collective bargaining agreement with the province expired. The union is asking for compensation for real hours worked and better conditions for its members in a province-run daycare system that charges much lower fees compared to the rest of the country. They say they often work much longer hours than employees at government-run daycares, yet still get the same pay.

Strikers held demonstrations at locations across the province, including at multiple sites in Montreal.

Quebec's daycare workers have been without a collective bargaining agreement since the last one expired on Nov. 30, 2013. The FIPEQ union, which is affiliated with the Confederation of Trade Unions of Quebec, says it's had 28 unproductive negotiation sessions since the last agreement expired.

"Unfortunately, with the way the Liberal government has reacted to our demands, we cannot stay silent," FIPEQ president Kathleen Courville told CTV News. "We have decided to intensify our pressure tactics in order to put some real pressure on the government at the negotiation table."

Quebec's provincially-subsidized home daycare system charges just \$7 a day for a daycare spot, which is significantly less than rates in the rest of the country. Quebec's daycare service averages out to \$152 a month, while parents in most other provinces pay closer to \$850 a month for the same services.

But Quebec daycare workers say they are shouldering the costs of their province's much-reduced rate, working long hours while their actual pay is capped at 35 hours per week.

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