

All Coronation Park child care rooms will remain open pending instruction from Lambton City Council ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Coronation Park Day Nursery is seeing a dip in enrolment for this fall, but a brief interruption in registration this spring isn't the cause, say senior Lambton County staff.

"We're seeing a decline in day care (numbers) due to the start of all-day kindergarten," said Margaret Roushorne, general manager of the county's social services division.

Roushorne provided a brief update on the Sarnia day care during Thursday's afternoon council-in-committee meeting. Lambton County council is expected to discuss the fate of the Oak Avenue facility Sept. 3.

While some speculation has been swirling that one of two infant rooms is expected to close at the day care this fall, Roushorne told councillors that the discussion was only happening due to enrolment numbers.

Coronation Park will now keep all six of its child care rooms open pending a decision from county council.

An estimated \$1.1-million deficit is still anticipated at the day care this year. However, Roushorne cautioned this figure could fluctuate slightly depending on enrolment and staffing numbers.

While the Ontario government provided a \$5-million transitional fund to the county, Deputy St. Clair Township Mayor Peter Gilliland said the public needs to realize this funding isn't strictly for Coronation Park.

These dollars are expected to assist the county's entire child-care system, he noted.

Coronation Park provides 100 licensed day care spots. In the spring, a total of 69 school-aged children were registered in before-and-after-school programming through the day care.

Even if enrolment remains steady, Plympton-Wyoming Mayor Lonny Napper said staffing cuts might be one of the few solutions because operational costs still outweigh revenue even in the event the day care is full.

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