

Lack of child care an ongoing struggle in western Labrador ^[1]

Author: CBC News

Source: CBC News ^[2]

Format: Article

Publication Date: 9 Sep 2014

EXCERPTS

Parents in western Labrador continue to struggle to find affordable child care, and the region's largest employer has hit a snag with a potential solution.

Jennifer Hiscock says her summer has been a stressful one while searching for a solution for her two children.

Building Blocks Daycare in Labrador City has 60 spaces, but Hiscock said the waiting list to get a child into care has 120 names on it.

"My kids have been on the waiting list at the After School Zone, because they're both school-aged children, since January. They can't even give me an estimated time frame of a possibility of them ever getting in there," she said.

Hiscock said the lack of child care means other options have become expensive - too expensive for her to afford.

"It equalled out to \$550 every two weeks, or \$1100 a month. Guess what? That's my bi-weekly income. Is it worth it? Absolutely not," said Hiscock.

"You can't afford to work because child care expenses are so high, but you can't afford not to work because the cost of living is so high."

The Iron Ore Company of Canada completed development of a space for child care, but the company has been unable to find a third-party group to run the not-for-profit centre.

Marsha Power-Slade, an IOC spokesperson, said now the company has given up the search.

"We've also talked many times in partnership with the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services, the College of the North Atlantic, industry and local stakeholders to explore every avenue possible to make this project a reality," she said.

The company said it will continue to hold on to the space and consider any proposal to run the centre that comes across their path, but the 60-child space will remain vacant until then.

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