

# Public daycare flat fee will most likely get the axe, family minister says <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Read online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS:

Soon, the 17-year-old flat fee at Quebec's public daycares will be no more, Family Minister Francine Charbonneau said Tuesday. "What I can say with all transparency is that probably the single-rate is over," she said.

That morning, the Liberal Party held an impromptu caucus meeting to discuss the thorny issue of restructuring the fee at public daycares. "We're hearing everything: change it, don't change. Pay more, pay less," Charbonneau said.

Quebec plans to release the details of the new pricing formula within the next two weeks.

The only option that doesn't seem to be on the table anymore is to maintain the status quo at public daycares, the universal fee of \$7.30 a day per child. A cabinet document leaked this month showed the government was preparing to replace the one-price-for-all system with a sliding-scale fee based on parents' income.

The new prices would supposedly range from \$8 per child a day for families with a combined income of less than \$75,000 a year, to \$15 to \$20 for those making more than \$150,000.

During last April's provincial election campaign, Philippe Couillard pledged to ditch the Parti Québécois government's plan to raise the price at public daycares from \$7 to \$9 and index fees thereafter.

Coalition Avenir Québec leader François Legault called the premier out on his broken promise and argued that increasing the daycare fee would squeeze Quebec's middle class.

"As long as there isn't a tax decrease, we have to stop picking the pockets of taxpayers," he said.

A recent Léger-CKAC-Le Devoir poll showed that two-thirds of Quebecers were in favour of pegging daycare fees to parents' income.

But not all Liberal MNAs appear to be on board with the idea.

After facing a protest of 2,000 daycare workers and unhappy parents in his riding of Sherbrooke, Liberal MNA Luc Fortin told La Presse last week the plan "doesn't make any sense."

Couillard denied that there has been any grumbling within his party about changing the daycare fee.

"On the contrary, we've never seen such energy and capacity for MNAs to discuss and get engaged in the decision that a government is going to make," he said. "It is a bright day for what it means to be a member of the assembly here."

Liberal MNA for D'Arcy-McGee, David Birnbaum, described the atmosphere in caucus as "very positive."

"We all got elected knowing there were tough times ahead for Quebec. There is a very active and sincere exchange with no holds barred," he said.

"We're looking at the scenarios. The notion is to make sure, in the current context, that a program that makes Quebec unique in North America remains viable and as universal as possible."

**Region:** Quebec <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability <sup>[4]</sup>

funding <sup>[5]</sup>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/11/public-daycare-flat-fee-will-most-likely-get-axe-family-minister> [2] <https://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/no-caucus-revolt-over-daycare-fees-couillard-says> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7855> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding>