

Federal government's actions lead to daycare closure, leaving parents scrambling^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A child care centre in Ottawa declared bankruptcy on Friday, unable to cope with financial problems that started when the federal government unilaterally cancelled its rent subsidy.

The non-profit Tupper Tots child care centre was created in 1994 and was originally located in the federally owned Charles Tupper Building. It was opened in response to the government's Workplace Daycare Policy, which sought to provide workplace child care for employees of the federal government and of Crown corporations.

Tupper Tots was able to offer high quality child care due to an initial investment by the federal government as well as free rent, which allowed the centre to maintain reasonable fees. Until 2010, at least 70 per cent of the parents using the centre were federal government employees. In addition, many parents working at Canada Post headquarters also use the centre.

In 2013, Public Works and Government Services Canada arbitrarily cancelled Tupper Tots' lease, forcing the centre to move to a new location and incur rent, maintenance and renovation costs. Since then, the centre has been struggling to stay afloat financially. Tupper Tots informed parents and staff on Friday, November 28 that it would be closing for good.

"The federal government is now directly responsible for the loss of 63 quality child care spots in Ottawa," said Robyn Benson, National President of PSAC. "By stomping on its own workplace daycare policy, the government has thrown dozens of families into crisis and eliminated crucial spaces at a time when families all over Canada are scrambling."

François Paradis agrees. He's the President of PSAC's Union of Postal Communications Employees, which represents four Canada Post employees who lost child care spots when the centre declared bankruptcy.

"Our members are really upset. Their children didn't get to say goodbye to their teachers and now they are desperate to find alternate care."

PSAC originally negotiated with the federal government in the 1980s to begin supporting workplace child care, because there were so few options available for parents. More than 30 years later, little has changed. Parents outside Quebec pay a huge proportion of their income on child care fees, and spots in non-profit centres are both expensive and hard to find.

"We call on the federal government to re-instate its support for Tupper Tots and workplace child care," said Benson. "Canada needs a universal, affordable child care system. All Canadian families deserve access to quality, affordable care. Wrong-headed schemes like income splitting only benefit a handful of rich families"

PSAC is working with CUPE and other community partners to explore ways to save Tupper Tots. The union is also committed to fighting for universal child care, so scenarios like this one don't happen again.

Region: Ontario^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/12/federal-governments-actions-lead-daycare-closure-leaving-parents>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/12/federal-governments-actions-lead-daycare-closure-leaving-parents>^[2]

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/federal-governments-actions-lead-to-daycare-closure-leaving-parents-scrambling-516602241.html>^[3]

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