

Closure of Tupper Tots Child Care a testament to failure by three levels of government ^[1]

Press Release

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EXCERPTS:

Families whose children attended Tupper Tots Child Care Centre until its sudden closure on November 28 were let down by all three levels of government, say supporters of licensed child care in the city of Ottawa.

As Ottawa Centre MP Paul Dewar raised the families' plight in Question Period last week, supporters of the bankrupt centre charged that it had closed as a direct result of the Harper government backing away from its Workplace Daycare Policy.

"The sad end of this important community resource is just another indication of the Harper government's hostility to working parents," said Shellie Bird, Education Officer with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). The union represented the child care workers at Tupper Tots before its closure.

When it first opened in the 1980s, Tupper Tots Child Care Centre was part of a federal workplace child care policy, which had approximately a dozen centres across the country, three of them in Ottawa. The program provided child care services to federal government employees, and parents in the immediate community.

But by 2013, the centre's custodian, Public Works and Government Services Canada, ended the rental agreement for the child care centre in the Sir Charles Tupper building on Riverside Drive. After it was forced to relocate, Tupper Tots incurred major renovation and re-opening costs at its new location. Last month, unable to fill spaces because of a lack of parent fee subsidy, the centre was forced into bankruptcy.

"What's so frustrating is that the building space that housed Tupper Tots stands empty to this day. What used to be a bustling, lively centre offering affordable and accessible quality child care is now a vast, unused space, providing no use to anyone," said Bird.

Bird noted that other levels of government bore responsibility, direct and indirect, for the loss of Tupper Tots. "We mustn't forget that the Wynne government has failed to provide adequate funding to make child care truly affordable to parents; in fact, the government's changes to the provincial funding formula for child care have made the system more unstable.

"But even more infuriating is the City of Ottawa's refusal to take any leadership in helping these families maintain their children's care. The City could have done much more to prevent this tragedy," Bird said.

Supporters and allies of Tupper Tots families are working to find ways to help accommodate the parents' and children's need for child care as well as their need to say goodbye to former staff.

"The children's relationships with the staff at Tupper Tots are vitally important to their development and well being," said Bird, "Now they have been ruptured; Steven Harper should be ashamed."

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: public management ^[4]

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