

The daycare dividend ^[1]

Child care crunch

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Source: Winnipeg Free Press

Publication Date: 24 Jan 2015

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Macy Wight, with her giraffe dress and bunny sneakers, can't decide whether to ask for more upside-down tickles from her mom or keep snacking on whatever her dad delivers next from the kitchen.

"Doats!" she points to the nearby bowl of peanut-butter toast cut into squares.

Macy is a spunky, squealy, typical, middle-class toddler. Shortly after her birth, her parents, Sonya and Mitch, had a typical middle-class panic.

"Basically, a month after she was born, I started hearing from other moms about how impossible it was to find daycare," said Sonya Wight, a pharmacist. "A lot of them were going back to work in a month or two and couldn't find anything."

The Wights immediately put Macy's name on the province's online daycare waiting list, researching and choosing a dozen centres in a wide swath of Charleswood, Linden Woods and Tuxedo.

About a month before Wight was slated to return to her pharmacy, she started working the phones, checking to see where she was on the waiting lists. She was number 500 at one daycare, 600 at another. Several daycare directors just laughed at her. Some didn't return her calls. The couple were starting to think about calling in favours with friends who might help them finagle a spot in a home daycare, which wasn't their first choice.

"I was just in panic mode in that point," Wight said. "I didn't realize it was that bad."

It is that bad. And, long wait lists and last-minute scrambles are just part of our perennial problem with child care.

Despite huge investments by some governments -- Manitoba has tripled the provincial budget for child care in the last 15 years -- and despite three decades of different promises, policies and programs from the federal government, Canada still is at the bottom of the international barrel among industrialized nations when it comes to child care.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: economy ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/01/daycare-dividend>

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