

# Wait lists expected to grow as province pauses daycare funding <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** News Talk 650

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 18 Mar 2015

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## EXCERPTS

With no plans to increase funding for Saskatchewan's daycare and pre-kindergarten programs, enormously long waiting lists are primed to grow longer.

That's according to Lisa Leibel, executive director for the Preston Early Learning Centres in Saskatoon.

"For parents looking for daycare it must be disappointing for them because daycare is extremely hard to find -- waiting lists are long," she said after the provincial budget was released Wednesday.

"Increases in spaces have been great for the parents, but we don't have enough trained people. We'll get some reprieve with this announcement, but for the parents, it's not looking so good."

Leibel is talking about the 500 spaces the province added across Saskatchewan last year. The 51 spaces added to the newest daycare attached to Willowgrove School were gone just as quickly as they were announced.

"We had about 450 kids on that waiting list, so quite substantial, and we could only clear 51 of those children," Leibel said adding at least three times a week, the waiting list for daycare grows. While daycares do expect some turnover each year from children moving on to Grade 1, she only expects to see that for four to five children this year.

The Preston Early Learning Centre includes daycares on Preston Avenue, Holliston School, Fairhaven School and another in Lakewood.

"And all of them are full with waiting lists," Leibel said.

Even if the province added 1,000 spaces just in Saskatoon, chances are it wouldn't be enough, according to Leibel.

In 2014, the province added 500 daycare spaces across Saskatchewan. Finance Minister Ken Krawetz forecasted this budget would come in light of tough choices for the government, and child daycare was one of those tough choices.

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

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