

Women losing job experience, can't get back in workforce because of childcare costs ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The high cost of childcare is a challenge for some parents in Newfoundland and Labrador, with many leaving their careers in order to care for their children rather than foot a huge daycare bill.

Some parents who give up their careers to take care of children find it difficult to get back into their profession once those kids are older.

Sue Locke said she did just that 14 years ago when her daughter was born, when the family realized the cost of full-time childcare.

"We were in for a big shock. Very quickly realized we couldn't afford it," she said. "My entire salary, really, plus more would go to just the childcare situation."

Although Locke has an education degree, she said it doesn't do her any good now that she's ready to re-enter the workforce.

"I guess a lot of people would look at me now as being maybe even untrainable at my age. Who wants to hire somebody my age to go back and retrain for anything else?" said Locke.

"I'm not qualified anymore to teach, so it leaves a Grand Canyon-sized gap in your resume."

Same problems 50 years ago

That gap in work experience can be a career killer for parents, says Linda Ross, with the provincial advisory council on the status of women.

"You step out of the workforce, it's very, very difficult to get back in - never mind look at the advancement in your career," said Ross.

"Just getting back into it is a real challenge because as you know, things change so rapidly nowadays."

According to Ross, this problem is nothing new for the province - and it's about time a feasible solution is reached.

"The other day I was looking at this book which was the royal commission on the status of women. It's almost 50 years old and one of the recommendations in it was about the fact that there needs to be childcare facilities on campuses, at government institutions, in businesses in order to have good quality, affordable, accessible childcare," she said.

Ross added that creating these solutions is key to ensuring equality in the workplace.

Meanwhile, Locke says it's a shameful situation that parents in the province are still facing the same challenges surrounding childcare that she faced over a decade ago.

"There are women out there who are professionals, they really don't want to give up their career and leave that gap in their resume for several years and not have it filled," she said.

"I don't think anybody should have to be forced to do that. Personally, if I hadn't done that, we would have lived in total poverty."

Region: Newfoundland ^[3]

Tags: mother's labour force participation ^[4]

work/life balance ^[5]

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