

Terrace, BC council backs subsidized daycare ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

A recent presentation by local daycare professionals to city council revealed that daycare services are lacking in Terrace, but council was divided over whether a major government subsidy is the right way to remedy the problem.

Early Childhood Education Branch of BC co-chairs Terry Walker and Nancy Dumais, both managers of local daycares, spoke to council of their society's mission to get the B.C. government to finance a system that would cost families \$10 a day.

Dumais and Walker argued that the current system of combined not-for-profit and private daycare is broken. They said Terrace is an example of a city where the current daycare programs are hard to afford and also understaffed.

Dumais told council that "there is a shortage particularly of infant and toddler child care service in Terrace. I have people call every day and we are full. I have a list of about 30. That shortage of spaces means that parents can't necessarily return to work after parental leave."

"Families are definitely having trouble finding daycare right now," she said.

Low wages deter potential professionals from entering the field and the reason wages are low is because they are based on a fee system that is difficult to balance with the need to charge an adequate amount for a high cost service with the necessity of keeping fees low enough to attract clients, she and Walker said.

They added that including better early childhood education with daycare would help remedy child poverty issues by allowing more parents to work.

Two councillors spoke out with criticisms of the subsidy plan, however the vote eventually went 5-1 for the council to endorse the Early Childhood Education Branch of BC's plan through an online form.

The Union of British Columbian Municipalities as well as Kitimat, Prince Rupert and Smithers have endorsed it as well, the delegates told council.

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