

New Brunswick cutting \$1.9M from daycare program ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Private daycare operators in New Brunswick are reeling Friday following word the province will make cuts to a key program in June.

The Quality Improvement Funding (QIFS) program will receive \$1.9 million less in funding.

The program is designed to increase the availability and quality of child daycare services in the province by boosting salaries of the people who work in the industry on a scale based on their level of training.

The funding cut applies to the salaries of owner/operators, but not to daycare staff. Daycare staff will continue to receive the subsidy.

In a tweet sent out Saturday, PC education critic Jody Carr said the real figure is \$2.4 million. The comment was made after the education department admitted Friday, after questioning during budget estimates, the cuts are deeper.

In many cases, owners will see \$5 an hour cut from their salaries.

Lisa Brown says that means she will make less than the workers at her daycare, Lisa's Playhouse, in Roachville, just outside of Sussex.

Brown learned of the cut Thursday in an email from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

"At first, I just felt like I was kicked in the stomach," she said.

"It's tugging at my heart strings, because my heart's with the children. But yet, I have to have a business, I have to live, I have to provide for my family. I just don't know how it's going to turn out."

Brown suspects many smaller licensed operators will be put out of business by the change.

"When is enough, enough?" asks Shawnee McConchie.

She co-owns and operates Wonderland Childcare in Norton with her sister.

"It's so quick that honestly, we don't have time to get together and be able to say to the province, 'Look, can we think of other ways to do this?'"

Cuts will affect 260 owner operators

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- reprinted from CBC News

Region: New Brunswick ^[3]

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