

Karen Casey seeking your input on child care in Nova Scotia ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

There's only a few days left to add your voice to the government's review of regulated child care in Nova Scotia.

"We want this to be a broad range survey with input from as many Nova Scotians as possible," said education minister Karen Casey.

Casey said they want feedback on subjects such as accessibility, programming and professional development for staff.

The survey, which went up last month, is online until Friday. It's just one part of the review, which will also include current research and information from other provinces.

Focus groups have also taken place.

"When we formed government we made a commitment to look at some of the programs that were offered in public education and through the early learning branch here at the department to have a look at what was happening in those programs," said Casey.

The department has already completed an action plan for public education, and early intervention for children diagnosed with, or at risk of, developmental delays.

Child care is the third item on their list.

Casey said this review revolves around safety and quality.

"We believe that if we have quality programming in our daycares that students will gain some of that confidence and some of those experiences that will make ... it easier to transition into Primary."

More than 2,000 people have taken the survey,

"I think that tells us that Nova Scotians do want to be part of the process. They do want to be part of any change that takes place," said Casey.

Tammy Findlay is an assistant professor of political and Canadian studies at Mount Saint Vincent University. She recently co-wrote a report called *A New Economy Needs Child Care* for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives in Nova Scotia.

Their argument critiques the Ivany Report

"We were very surprised that given the focus of the report on the need for economic growth in the province and ... dealing with some of the demographic challenges, that they really had nothing to say about early learning and child care, which we know addresses both of those problems very effectively."

Findlay is also questioning this government review.

"I'm wondering why we need another review of child care. We just had a review of the early years [from the Dexter government], which actually gave us quite a lot of useful information about child care," said Findlay. "The evidence is very clear about the benefits of child care, so the purpose of the review is unclear to me."

She also said the review was selective because the focus groups were by invite only.

Minister Casey said they brought in childcare operators and staff to make sure they had their voices.

Casey said she wants her action plans to create change. She said they will use every thing they hear to inform their next moves.

"We have all seen a lot of reports that have collected dust for many years and that will not happen under my watch."

- reprinted from CBC News

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