

Quebec won't maintain low childcare fees in Nunavik ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

The Quebec government has refused a request by the Kativik Regional Government, aimed at protecting parents from higher childcare fees, to maintain its current contribution to the region's childcare program.

The province introduced amendments to its Education Childcare Act last fall, which included a plan to hike daycare fees for certain users.

While parents have for years paid \$7.30 per child, per day, for childcare in Quebec's subsidized system, one measure under Bill 28 proposed that Quebec families pay for daycare on a sliding scale, based on their household income.

That measure was approved in April, and applied throughout the province.

"They said they weren't going to apply an exemption for the region," said Margaret Gauvin, director of the KRG's department of sustainable employment, which oversees the region's 19 childcare centres.

But it's unclear what that will mean for Nunavimmiut families at this point, she said.

Under the new program, families with a total income of less than \$55,000 will continue paying \$7.30 a day, although the fee will climb to \$11.41 per day for households whose annual income is \$100,000 and as high as \$20 per day in households that bring in more than \$150,000.

Those amounts can be further offset by federal subsidies, the KRG pointed out.

You can calculate your daycare expenses on this Quebec website.

"It'll likely take a couple of years to see what that means for the region," Gauvin said. "We'll have to review the program to see who's going to daycare, and if the profile of the parent has changed."

In the meantime, the KRG plans to continue to request that the region be exempt from the new fee scale, Gauvin said, on the basis of the high cost of living and the high birthrate in the region.

In that context, Gauvin said childcare centres in Nunavik are an important means of nutrition for growing children and extra income for a family, if it means both parents can work.

Today, the KRG delivers care to just over 1,000 Nunavimmiut children at its 19 daycare centres.

Earlier this year, the KRG also requested modifications to Quebec Bill 27, which proposes that childcare providers sign a contract, whose content is determined by the province, with its users.

The province has agreed to allow Nunavik to draft its contract in three languages: French, English and Inuktitut.

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