

Selinger takes aim at Tories over child care ^[1]

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Premier Greg Selinger said a privatized system for daycare would increase costs, and lower accessibility and quality for Manitoba families.

Selinger addressed a media scrum Friday afternoon in his office and said Conservative suggestions the province move to a privatized system will return Manitoba to the 1990s when, according to Selinger, daycare rates went up.

“When they did this last time, in the ‘90s, it meant less affordable daycare, because rates went up,” he said. “It meant less accessible daycare because they froze the number of spaces and it meant less quality daycare because there were wages that were frozen and people weren’t able to get the training and the support that they need to increase their ability to provide a quality service.”

On Thursday, the province announced an additional 900 daycare spaces, which Selinger said is added to 800 from last year.

“The answer is a better funded and supported non-profit system like we have in Manitoba,” Selinger said. “That system has served families well and we need to continue to expand it.”

Conservative family services critic Ian Wishart said, in the Conservative plan, a public and private system “will work together and they will each take an appropriate portion of the marketplace.”

He said Selinger is hoping for assistance from the federal government that Wishart doesn’t believe is forthcoming.

“We look at the waiting list of basically 12,000 people, we know that a portion of that are often people who have at least some money to help pay towards it, so it can be more cost-shared,” he said. “Licensed private daycares can fill that gap. I know it cannot take the whole list, but it can take the size of the list down from something that is almost insurmountable to something that can actually be dealt with.”

-reprinted from the Winnipeg Sun

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