

# McGivney Centre's child care program finds new life <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** The Windsor Star

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 11 Jun 2015

## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

A valued preschool day care program that caters to children with special needs has been saved.

The John McGivney Children's Centre Preschool Program was poised to shut down this summer after it appeared families could no longer tap into about the \$360,000 from Ontario's education ministry used to help subsidize their costs.

Parents and community supporters of the McGivney Centre were up in arms over the possible loss of the program with petitions launched and fundraising efforts put in place.

But officials said funding will remain available for most families after the day-care program has been reworked to instead provide subsidies based on income levels as assessed by the City of Windsor — much the same way subsidies are provided to families for other area day-care providers.

Program costs will also be reduced from about \$75 per day to roughly \$45 under the new structure.

"We are very optimistic from our end," said Elaine Whitmore, CEO for the McGivney Centre. "It was necessary for us to revive the program to have a new business model in place. It's a model that will provide the same inclusive child-care program we've had for 30 years."

Other changes are expected under the new structure, but they were not being released on Friday.

"We can not say too much more until we speak to our families and staff," Whitmore said. "We will have a more formal statement at the appropriate time, but we are pleased."

The new model is expected to broaden the number of children who will be able to benefit under the centre's day-care program.

The McGivney Centre program had been assisting up to 45 families with special needs children.

Whitmore expects full details of the changes to be available next week.

City administrators are responsible for handing down funding — provided by the provincial government — to families who utilize such programs as the one provided by the McGivney Centre.

There had been some misunderstanding that funding for the program had actually been cut by the government.

But with a resolution being introduced by McGivney Centre's administrators, city officials said Friday users of the program should still be able to tap into subsidies and get quality care for their children.

"We are very pleased," said Jelena Payne, the city's community development and health commissioner. "As the service manager for Windsor-Essex child care, we are pleased to hear they have developed a revised business model so that the McGivney (program) remains and continues to provide services to children in Windsor-Essex.

"We think it's a win-win all around."

The preschool program began when the John McGivney Children's Centre opened its doors in 1978.

The centre annually helps about 2,500 children with physical, neurological and developmental challenges. It operates with a staff of 140 and an annual budget of almost \$10 million.

-reprinted from The Windsor Star

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** funding <sup>[4]</sup>

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