

Daycare waiting list tops 12,000 ^[1]

Author: Pursaga, Joyanne

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EXCERPTS

Manitoba families are waiting for more than 12,000 child-care spots, the highest figure yet on the province's online registry, according to the Manitoba Child Care Association.

And the shortage is leaving parents at risk of not returning to work or school because they can't find a spot, said Pat Wege, the organization's executive director.

"It happens all the time ... Parents do call us, they come to our office, because they don't know where to turn," said Wege. "A lot of parents still don't realize there's a waiting list of two to three years sometimes."

The demand isn't expected to drop any time soon. Statistics Canada data released last month found 70.7% of Manitoba families with at least one child under 16 had two working parents, the third highest proportion in the country.

Adetoro Eludipo said she placed her two-and-a-half-year-old son on the provincial waiting list at birth but didn't receive the offer of a spot until two weeks ago.

Luckily, she found a placement in a home daycare when her son was 17 months old but she knows others aren't as lucky.

"I have (friends) who have to step down the hours they can take at work to be able to take care of their children. It's very hard," said Eludipo.

Wege urged the province to speed up its universal child-care plan to meet the demand and called on the federal government to help fund it. Last year, Premier Greg Selinger committed to a universal plan in his throne speech but didn't specify a timeline to deliver it. The province's current five-year plan, which started in 2014, sets a target of 5,000 more spaces.

This effort includes the Family Child Care Project, an eight- to 12-month course on licensing and running a home daycare, which is expected to create about 83 new home daycares and 375 new spaces when its latest round of applicants completes the program, likely around fall 2016. These include eight spaces at the home daycare Aludipo's son attends.

Irina Kuzmenko, who runs that daycare, said the licensing process would be tough to navigate on her own and its safety requirements even guided her house-hunting.

"We tried to find the house where child care would be comfortable," said Kuzmenko.

Jobs and the Economy Minister Kevin Chief said the province has invested \$420,000 on the training program so far, which allows students to attend it for free.

"It's one of these innovative approaches to meet the demands of two people (per household) working now," said Chief.

-reprinted from Winnipeg Sun

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/07/daycare-waiting-list-tops-12000>

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