

P.E.I. childcare subsidy program cut again ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

For the second year in a row, funding for childcare subsidies from P.E.I.'s Department of Family and Human Services has been cut.

Funding in this year's budget has dropped from \$2.9 million to \$2.6 million. With a similar decrease the year before, the budget has dropped nearly 20 per cent over two years.

That's despite a commitment by the Liberals as part of their 2015 campaign platform to increase funding for the subsidy by \$300,000.

"The commitment is still there; it's part of the mandate," said Family and Human Services Minister Tina Mundy.

"But we need to find out where we need to apply it within the childcare subsidy program."

Mundy said a review of the program is underway. She noted income levels required for qualifications haven't been adjusted for years.

"It's probably part of the issue, and that's why we need to take a look at the program. It is a great program but it hasn't been adjusted in many, many years."

Mundy said the budget has dropped because utilization of the program has declined. She said no one who qualifies for the subsidy has been turned away.

In 2011 there were 2,054 Island children covered under the subsidy, a number that dropped to 1,624 two years ago.

A government spokesperson said additional federal funding is expected this year for workforce training, with the Department of Workforce and Advanced Learning expected to provide funding to help parents cover the cost of childcare as they try to enhance their skills or return to the workforce.

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Region: Prince Edward Island ^[3]

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