

# Cuts to P.E.I. childcare subsidy putting 'strain on families'

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## EXCERPTS

P.E.I.'s Early Childhood Development Association says the province needs to overhaul its childcare subsidy program.

For the second year in a row, funding for those subsidies has been cut in the provincial budget.

For example, a single parent with one child — who makes below \$1,453.34 a month, net — qualifies for a full subsidy of up to \$34 a day depending on the age of the child.

But that subsidy shrinks as income increases.

The province argues too few people are currently accessing the program to justify increasing the budget.

But Sonya Hooper, executive director of the Early Childhood Development Association, said it's become too hard to qualify for the program.

"The minimum wage has gone up, which is fantastic, but the sliding scale hasn't changed to accommodate that," she said. "So in the absence of changing the sliding scale to match the rise in minimum wage there's more strain on families now, accessing childcare than there had been."

The income cutoffs have to be adjusted and brought up to date, she said.

"Minimum wage has risen to the point where people are already topping out for access to the childcare subsidy program," she said.

She wants some of the other eligibility requirements loosened, as well.

"Unless a family is working or in school they can't access the childcare subsidy program even on a part time basis," she said.

The province said it's reviewing the program.

"We'll anxiously await those results," said Hooper.

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

-reprinted from CBC News

**Region:** Prince Edward Island <sup>[3]</sup>

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