

More affordable child care needed in Alberta, advocates say ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Affordable child care advocates are using Mother's Day to remind the province that affordable, regulated child care is important to both children but also the workforce as a whole.

Cori Longo is with the Canadian Labour Congress.

She says the costs of quality child care are out of line.

"A lot of families struggle with the immense costs of child care ... families are paying hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars per child just for child care and we think that there should be a more affordable example," Longo said.

She says the starting point has to be good data on the challenges.

"We are asking for some comprehensive data to see the situation and then a review after the data," Longo said.

"We are asking the government to lead by example by putting childcare facilities in government offices."

Faika Satterthwaite said when she became a mother 28 years ago, the situation was tough.

"When I started with my own children, it was very difficult to get good child care, where you can leave your children and not worry," said Satterthwaite, who is a member of the Union of Healthcare Professionals.

"When you found a place, it cost an arm and a leg so it pushes a lot of people out of the workforce because it is not affordable."

Satterthwaite says she and others are calling on the government to get more involved, "by providing, public-funded, regulated, affordable child care services."

Longo says the issue affects many people.

"It is important for society," she said.

"This is an issue that affects families across the province."

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives — in their December 2015 report *They Go Up So Fast 2015, Child Care Fees in Canadian Cities* — concluded broadly the challenges parents face locating affordable child care.

"In too many Canadian cities full-time child care costs can absorb a substantial portion of a family's income. At the same time, parents can find it difficult to locate quality spaces or end up sitting on long waiting lists for those that are available," the report said.

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Region: Alberta ^[3]

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