

Ending child-care wait-list fees is a break for parents: Editorial ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

It's bad enough that there are licensed child-care spots for less than 25 per cent of Ontario's young children. But the fact that some child care facilities charge a wait-list fee only adds insult to injury for parents trying to navigate this competitive and complicated system.

It's especially concerning for parents because there is no way of knowing where you stand on a wait-list, or even if some parents are paying more to jump the queue.

Finally, for parents putting their names on multiple wait-lists in an effort to secure a licensed spot — or any spot — for their child, it can be expensive.

Just ask Sara Ehrhardt, who estimates she and her spouse Glenn Gustafson have spent \$400 on wait-list fees in their quest to secure a spot for their son, Clarence, in Toronto's east end.

So it's welcome news that the province posted regulations this week to ban child-care wait-list fees in licensed centres and homes by Sept. 1.

The new rules were introduced just three months after the Star reported on a petition to end the practice launched by two Toronto lawyers decrying wait list fees of \$10 to \$200 at some facilities.

Under the proposed new rules, licensed child-care centres and home daycare agencies would be required to develop a public wait-list policy that sets out the order in which children on the list are offered admission. Parents will be able to monitor their wait list status in a way that ensures confidentiality.

It's all good news for parents seeking child-care spots. But the best news of all would be for the federal government to establish a universal child care network that would end the shortage of licensed spaces and immediately put a stop to wait-list fees.

Parents can only hope.

-reprinted from Toronto Star

Region: Ontario ^[3]

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