

Low wages, lack of suitable buildings part of Nunavut's daycare problem ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

While parents across Nunavut wait years for daycare spots for their children, daycare operators are facing their own challenges.

"If you can't find workers, then there's no daycares," said Darienne Dunn, executive director of the Inukshuk Infant Development Centre in Iqaluit.

"The pay is not the wage that you can live on up here. So people don't work in the industry because they can't afford to work in the industry."

Dunn suggests the federal or territorial governments could help with pay or put more support into opening facilities.

This spring in the Nunavut legislature, Education Minister Paul Quassa said his department is starting to review the Child Day Care Act. He said the review will look at how local education authorities can take over the responsibility of creating and managing daycares.

"We know that they can't find buildings or spaces for daycare so because of that, we're reviewing that other law where we can allow more daycares to be opened," he said in Inuktitut.

Money to open daycares going untapped

Quassa said there is approximately \$5.2 million available to help with the opening of new daycares, but not all of the funds are being used.

He said it may be because people may not know how to access the programs.

The government has created a new Early Childhood Division in his department.

"The Early Childhood Division was created to provide support to the [District Education Authorities] in operating daycare centres in order to improve access to these facilities," he said.

Quassa added the money is strictly for the operation and maintenance of early childhood programs, not facilities.

"The Department of Education has no role in constructing facilities for the programs, as the onus is on the community to identify a facility that can be converted and opened as a facility," he said

-reprinted from CBC News

Region: Nunavut ^[3]

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