

# No child care forces Iqaluit mom to leave town<sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Carolyn Curtis's eight years of life in Iqaluit sits in boxes in her living room.

It's not unusual, especially this time of year, to see people pack up and leave Nunavut's capital. But Curtis says she has no other option.

She can't find child care for her two-and-a-half-year-old son, Joseph.

Curtis's struggle to find child care is common. There are seven daycares in Iqaluit. Parents often turn to people looking after children in their homes because the wait lists are years long.

"There are huge waiting lists, so if you don't get on when you're expecting, or even before you're expecting, it feels to me like there's no point even trying to get in," Curtis said.

She did put her name on the waiting list at Nunavut Arctic College, thinking some space might free up in the summer with students gone, but she's had no luck.

"The choice was kinda made for me that I have to leave and go where I can find support."

According to the Nunavut government, in 2015-2016 there were 905 names on waiting lists across the territory.

That doesn't mean that many children need care. Some children may be on multiple wait lists, according to the department of Education, hoping for one of about 1000 licensed spots around the territory.

With the excitement of a new baby, and her first, Curtis says didn't even think of child care when her son was born.

"By the time we needed a nanny or daycare, we struggled to find some," she said.

Curtis says they had a nanny for six months, but since then other options keep falling through. She even tried working part-time from home, but she couldn't afford to live that way.

She's heading to Nova Scotia on Wednesday where she will have support from her son's father and her parents.

"I'm really sad to leave," said Curtis, who'll be leaving a job with the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasauqtiit Society, where she was involved with the Inclusion Cafe.

"It is my home. I'm very attached to the people here and my work."

Darienne Dunn is not surprised by Curtis's story.

She runs the Inukshuk Infant Development Centre, a daycare at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit. It caters to students and staff first, before offering one of their 24 spots to the public.

When Dunn started her job in February, the wait list was close to 80.

"Some children that have been on that wait list have been on there since 2012," she said.

"When I started, I got to clear out a bunch of them because they are no longer needing care cause they're either too old and they've started school already or they've found care other places."

Dunn had her own obstacles finding child care in Iqaluit for her four-year-old daughter.

"This is the first job that I've had that I couldn't bring her with me," she said.

Skipping the wait lists, Dunn eventually found a place for her daughter with a woman who was looking after children in her home.

"It's pretty terrifying actually to have to try to work here and find care for your child."

-reprinted from CBC News

**Region:** Nunavut <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** accessibility <sup>[4]</sup>  
waiting list <sup>[5]</sup>

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