

Child care shortage in Manitoba ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

In just a few weeks, kids will be going back to school and many parents are scrambling to find child care.

"We get calls daily from people looking for child care," said Cathy Gardiner, director of Learning and Growing Day Care. "It's tough to tell them there's nothing available."

Most facilities have a waiting list, and there's also an online registry parents can sign up for – both can be very long.

"There's more than 14 thousand names on the online registry, for a little over 34 thousand spaces here in Manitoba," said Pat Wege, executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association.

Wege said demand for child care is high, and the licensing of new spaces has not caught up.

Wege explained any improvements will require political will, and to make that happen she believes parents need to apply some pressure on their elected officials.

"MLA's need to know how this is affecting families," Wege added.

Minister of Families, Scott Fielding, sent this statement:

"Our government has committed to being open and transparent with Manitobans. The numbers in the MCCA press release are incorrect. The current waitlist, as of July 31, 2016, is 14,872. This is an increase of nearly 3,000 from what Manitobans were told when the waitlist total of December 31, 2015 was made public.

Our government is making every attempt to determine why the NDP's numbers were so off the mark. At the same time, we recognize that too many families in Manitoba are waiting for child care spaces and that action is required.

Families, child care providers and other stakeholders have told us that extensive periods of consultation by the previous government failed to deliver solutions. Neither did simply throwing money at problems.

As a new government, we are in the process of reviewing the ELCC framework to develop an implementation plan that is realistic, practical and sustainable to significantly reduce the waitlist and keep it down into the future.

Our mandate is to remove red tape, improve access to quality and affordable child care and create an environment where early childhood educators will thrive.

This is a comprehensive process and we continue to work collaboratively with experts and front line workers in this field."

-reprinted from CTV News

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

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