

# Lack of childcare services means some Kamloops immigrants can't attend English classes <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Infotel News Kamloops

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 28 Sep 2016

## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

Language services for immigrants and refugees in Kamloops can be limited due to daycare options.

For people new to Kamloops and eager to learn essential English skills, there can be a barrier due to the availability of child care. Kamloops Immigrant Services, which offers English courses for immigrants new to the language, faces a capacity issue not for their students, but for their students' children, executive director Paul Lagace says.

"Children must be in the same location as the adults," he says. "If we had a bigger space we could accommodate more children."

The children need to stay near their parents due to their own language skills and cultural understandings. If something were to happen, it's necessary to have the parents on hand. If there's no space for the children at the daycare, it becomes a barrier to the parents' education.

The organization's centre on the North Shore, where classes are taught, only has room for seven children. Currently there are 60 people taking language classes throughout the day, though not all at the same time.

"There are some mothers... who are unable to attend language classes because their children are not in school and they have to stay home to care for them," Lagace says.

Classes take place during the day. While evening classes may be an option, Lagace points out that the city's transit system then becomes a problem as some people would need a bus at 10 p.m.

It's a funding problem, Lagace says. While a bigger space would solve the problem, he says he understands why the federal government, which funds the organization, can't send a big capital investment their way, as they don't have a big number of clients. Currently small funding patches come through make sure those most in need are helped.

"We do the best we can with what we have," he says. "We have enough staffing and space at this time to deal with the people most in need."

If the funding was there he says the organization could look at classes in a different location, where a larger childcare service could be provided while students are learning.

It takes about two years of part time classes for people to learn enough English to be functional in a typical work place, he says.

-reprinted from Infotel News Kamloops

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** access <sup>[4]</sup>

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