

For Immediate Release

Surplus of spaces in Toronto daycares

Ottawa, Canada, April 28, 2015 – Toronto daycares have a surplus of spaces, according to The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada. Today they release their report *Is there really a daycare shortage? A Toronto case study shows vacancies despite waiting lists and subsidies.*

The vacancy rate in Toronto daycares has ranged in the past few years from 3.58 percent to 6.64 percent. By way of comparison, the rental apartment vacancy rate in Toronto as of October 2014 was 1.6 percent.

The actual number of vacant daycare spaces since 2009 has ranged from 1,877 to 3,666 spaces. In 2014, there were between 1,905 and 3,488 vacant spaces. This does not include vacancies in over a thousand city regulated family home daycares because the data is not available.

Unfortunately, daycare vacancy rates and quality data are not readily available to parents or to the policymakers who make funding decisions.

While enrolment in centre-based care as a percentage of all young children increased an estimated 125 percent over two decades, provincial funding increased 266 percent.

This funding is funneled to the select minority of families who use daycare centres. A 2014 Statistics Canada study states that about 65% of parents with annual household income of at least \$100,000 used non-parental child care for their preschooler, compared to only 34% of households with an annual income below \$40,000. As a result, daycare funding is more likely to offset costs for wealthier families.

According to report author Helen Ward, “Preferential funding for daycare over other forms of child care is discriminatory, coercive, and ignores parental preferences. It makes it harder for low-income parents who prefer parental care for their child.”

A 2013 [IMFC poll](#) found that 76% of Canadians believe it is “best for children under six to be at home with a parent.”

The report recommends:

- Provincial governments make vacancy rates for all publicly-funded daycares easily accessible to the public
- Policymakers should be granted reliable data on daycare demand, enrollment, cost, quality,

childcare outcomes and parental preferences

- Funding “should be fair and equitable and neither encourage nor penalize caregiving choices” as per recommendations from the 1999 House of Commons Finance Committee

The report can be found online at: <http://www.imfcanada.org/daycare-surplus>

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