



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



Waitlist Fees in BC

Presentation for the
Provincial Child Care Council

June 8, 2017

Presentation Outline

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Overview

Challenge

- Securing child care: insufficient spaces to meet demand.
 - ➡ Child Care Providers create waitlists to manage demand.

Waitlist Fees

- Fees may be charged to parents to place child's name on a waitlist, or to register a child in a space.
- Waitlist fee may or may not be refundable or used towards future child care fees.
 - Parents may never access the space.
- Families with multiple children have increased costs to place multiple children on multiple lists.

Fee Types



- **Waitlist/Administration fees**
 - Charged to put the child's name on a list in the event a child care space for that child becomes available.
 - Often associated with expenses related to maintaining and managing a waitlist.
- **Registration fees**
 - Generally paid when the child is enrolled in child care and may be applied to first month's fees.

Consultation



Information was collected from:

- Cross jurisdictional scan of Canadian Provinces and Territories.
- Child Care Resource and Referral Programs
- Provincial Child Care Council

Provinces/Territories

- Only Ontario, Manitoba and Nunavut have taken steps to address waitlist fees:
 - Ontario banned waitlist fees in 2016
 - Manitoba introduced an online child care registry, un-refundable waitlist fees may not be charged; and
 - Nunavut child care providers do not charge waitlist fees

Data/Statistics



- Data on child care waitlist fees received from:
 - 2015 Parent Survey
 - 2016 Centre for Policy Alternatives Report: *A Growing Concern: 2016 Child Care Fees in Canada's Big Cities.*

Parent Child Care Survey



Results from 2015 Parent Child Care Survey

- 77% of respondents did not have to be waitlisted to secure a spot in their current child care arrangement.
 - Of those on a waitlist: 11% were in immediate need of care and 12% were waitlisted, but not in immediate need.
- Nearly half (47%) of respondents said they were not asked for any requirements in order to secure a place on the waitlist.
- 18% were registered on two waitlists.

2016 Report



From 2016 Report on Child Care Fees in Canada's Big Cities

Almost all Canadian cities (70%) report maintaining waitlists

- Percentage of centres maintaining waitlists in BC:
 - Vancouver – 96%
 - Burnaby – 80%
 - Richmond – 74%
 - Surrey – 25%
- Percentage of centres charging waitlists in cities in BC:
 - Vancouver – 47%
 - Richmond – 29%
 - Burnaby – 27%
 - Surrey – 6%

Fees Charged



Waitlist Fees

- No verifiable data on waitlist fees charged and how those fees are used by child care providers.
- Anecdotally, fees charged range from \$15 to more than \$100 per child.
- Families placing multiple children on waitlists, have additional costs to pay for fees at multiple centres.
 - Parents have reported paying as much as \$300-\$400 in waitlist fees to over 8 different child care centres.

Provider Profile Questionnaire



Data pending from Provider Profile Questionnaire

Questions asked to all Providers in receipt of CCOF

Waitlist Fees

- To place a child on your waitlist, what is required of parents?
- If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, do you provide parents with a written explanation of the refund policy for the fee/deposit?
- If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, is the fee deposit refundable?

Registration Fees


- When registering a child for your program what are required of parents?

Does paying for a waitlist fee constitute a pre-payment?

Question: Does paying for a waitlist fee constitute a pre-payment?

- If yes, can s. 19 of CCALA be applied to require child care providers to provide parents with a waitlist fee refund policy
- Findings :
 - Section 19 does not provide remedy for parents paying waitlist fees;
 - Section 19 does not require a refund to be issued, but only a refund policy to be created and provided;
 - A fee to be put on a waitlist does not fall within the criteria in s. 19 of the CCALA (does not = a prepayment for services);
 - Difficult to characterize being put on a waitlist as a service; and
 - May be protection for the parents who do not have waitlist fees refunded under the *Consumer Protection Act*

Consumer Protection Act



- Consumer Protection BC does not regulate child care.
- Consumer Protection usually refers parents back to MoH or MCFD if there are issues.

Potential application of “Future Performance Contract”

- Signed contracts re: waitlist fees; if breach of contract, Consumer Protection may offer assistance.

No signed contract

- Child Care Providers who do not have contracts and take a waitlist fee may be considered to be in breach of the *Business Practices and Consumer Protection Act*.

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Waitlist/Registration Fees: 2017/18 Parent Survey Group and Family Questions

Asked to All Providers in Receipt of CCOF						
Questions Asked to All Providers in Receipt of CCOF	Family providers			Group providers		
	Yes	No	Blank	Yes	No	
To place a child on your waitlist, parents are required to: Pay a fee/deposit	170		1,508	564		
To place a child on your waitlist, parents are required to: Register at a program affiliated with an institution (school, church, employer, etc.)	15		1,663	77	934	
If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, do you provide parents with a written explanation of the refund policy for the fee/deposit	327	442	909	760		
If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, is the fee/deposit: Refundable if parents choose to take their child off the waitlist	95		1,583	155		
If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, is the fee/deposit: Refundable if the child is not enrolled because a space does not become available	106		1,572	233		
If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, is the fee/deposit: Refundable once the child is enrolled	55		1,623	65		
If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, is the fee/deposit: Deducted from the first month's child care fees when the child is enrolled	186		1,492	221		
If you charge a fee/deposit to place a child's name on your waitlist, is the fee/deposit: Not refundable regardless of the circumstances, because the fee/deposit is only to hold a space on	62		1,616	295		
When registering a child for your program, parents are required to: Pay a registration /administrative fee	422		1,256	1,848		
When registering a child for your program, parents are required to: Pay the first and last month's child care fees	119		1,559	286		
When registering a child for your program, parents are required to: Register at a program affiliated with an institution (school, church, employer etc.)	16		1,662	68		
Notes:						
There were 3,119 group and 1,678 family providers that participated in the Parent Survey.						
A "blank" response is one that is left "un-answered".						