

## Charity Croker

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**Subject:** FW: Request for Meeting on Childcare Funding Eligibility – Cold Lake  
**Attachments:** Request for Meeting on Childcare Funding Eligibility – Cold Lake.pdf

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**From:** Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul <[Bonnyville.ColdLake.StPaul@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:Bonnyville.ColdLake.StPaul@assembly.ab.ca)>

**Sent:** May 26, 2025 5:21 PM

**To:** [education.minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:education.minister@gov.ab.ca)

**Cc:** JET Minister <[JET.Minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:JET.Minister@gov.ab.ca)>; Craig Copeland <[ccopeland@coldlake.com](mailto:ccopeland@coldlake.com)>; Barry Kalinski <[bkalinski@md.bonnyville.ab.ca](mailto:bkalinski@md.bonnyville.ab.ca)>; [Mark.Hickey@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Mark.Hickey@forces.gc.ca); James Johnson <[james.johnson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:james.johnson@gov.ab.ca)>; Kevin Nagoya <[knagoya@coldlake.com](mailto:knagoya@coldlake.com)>; [Dipen.Mistry@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Dipen.Mistry@forces.gc.ca); Ben Berlinguette <[bberlinguette@md.bonnyville.ab.ca](mailto:bberlinguette@md.bonnyville.ab.ca)>; Crystal Schienbein <[havenchildcarecl@gmail.com](mailto:havenchildcarecl@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Request for Meeting on Childcare Funding Eligibility – Cold Lake

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Good afternoon,

Please find attached a letter from MLA Scott Cyr requesting a meeting with the hon. minister.

Thank you,



**Philip Schienbein**

Constituency Assistant for

**MLA Scott Cyr - Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ALBERTA

May 26, 2025

Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides  
Minister of Education and Child Care  
Government of Alberta  
423 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 2B6

**Re: Request for Meeting on Childcare Funding Eligibility – Cold Lake**

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

Allow me to first express my sincere admiration for your dedication and proactive leadership as you take on the critical portfolio of Education and Child Care. Your proven track record in fostering effective educational policies and championing community-oriented initiatives has significantly contributed to our province's development.

I am writing to request a meeting regarding the recent policy changes affecting affordability funding eligibility for new licensed for-profit childcare programs in Alberta, specifically their significant impact on Cold Lake. Effective May 15, 2025, eligibility for affordability funding has been restricted due to a federally imposed cap under the Canada-Alberta Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CACWELCC). New private centres will now qualify only if they open in one of five designated "high waitlist" communities, notably excluding Cold Lake.

This decision impacts the city, which is currently experiencing an acute childcare shortage exacerbated by unique local factors not fully captured by census data alone. A report prepared for the Northern Alberta Development Council (*Shadow Populations in Northern Alberta, pages 13–14*) identifies Cold Lake's significant shadow population which inflates our actual population by nearly 30% above census figures. Additionally, the forthcoming arrival of the federal government's F-35 program at 4 Wing Cold Lake will further increase the local population by approximately 6,000–9,000 individuals, intensifying the existing childcare crisis.

The shortage of accessible childcare in Cold Lake is already having tangible consequences. Skilled professionals have declined relocation opportunities specifically because childcare placement could not be secured. Local employers consistently report that this lack of childcare spaces significantly hampers their ability to recruit and retain talent, directly impacting economic growth and stability.

By limiting new private programs from eligibility for affordability funding, this policy not only stalls the development of new childcare spaces in Cold Lake, but also undermines an important avenue for female entrepreneurship. According to Statistics Canada, women make up 96% of the childcare workforce. This policy disproportionately affects women, both as primary employees and as entrepreneurs within the childcare sector. Statistics Canada's study highlights that women entrepreneurs disproportionately

operate private childcare facilities, significantly contributing to local economies and employment opportunities for other women.

Female entrepreneurs who were in the process of creating these childcare spaces were not forewarned that they would lose funding eligibility, and many now stand to lose their investment and some their life-savings.

An Indigenous entrepreneur from Cold Lake brought this critical issue to my attention. Her experience underscores the significant barriers faced by women who, without access to funding, may be forced to abandon significant investment and entrepreneurial opportunities that contribute meaningfully to our local economy and provide critical childcare solutions. I have attached a copy of her email.

It's worth noting that other parts of the constituency—such as Bonnyville—are also experiencing childcare placement shortages. However, because many of those efforts are currently being led by non-profit operators, they are not directly impacted by this recent policy change affecting new private programs.

Minister Matt Jones, in his previous role with Jobs, Economy and Trade, made the difficult decision to implement these eligibility changes. His actions, though challenging, were understandable given the constraints imposed by the federal government's funding cap. However, given Cold Lake's rapidly growing needs driven by military expansion and renewed oilsands development, our community urgently requires inclusion on the list of prioritized locations.

Cold Lake's circumstances require reconsideration of its exclusion from priority funding eligibility. Given the significance of this issue, I respectfully request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss Cold Lake's childcare needs and explore potential collaborative solutions. Local municipal leaders have also indicated their interest in participating in this meeting, reflecting the shared concern and regional significance of the issue.

Thank you for your attention and for considering our community's urgent request. I look forward to your response and the opportunity to discuss this matter in detail.

Sincerely,



Scott Cyr, MLA  
Bonnyville-Cold Lake-St. Paul

Honourable Matt Jones, Minister of Jobs,  
Economy and Trade

Mayor Craig Copeland, City of Cold Lake

Reeve Barry Kalinski, MD of Bonnyville

Colonel Mark Hickey, Wing Commander, 4 Wing  
Cold Lake

Crystal Schienbein, Haven Childcare