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# Students Come First?!?

By Tracy Smith



Children at UPEI Daycare rehearsing for their Christmas concert

The UPEI Daycare Centre located in the basement of Marian Hall has been in operation for approximately fourteen years. The daycare offers child care to children of the student and staff of UPEI and if there is any available space to children in the outside community. Applications are accepted on a first come first serve basis with the children of students getting first priority. There are three waiting lists, one for students, one for staff and one for outsiders. When a spot becomes available the waiting list of students is gone through until the spot is full, in the case that all the parents on the list have already made previous arrangements or are no longer interested the daycare staff the proceeds to the list of staff and if the spot is still not filled they proceed to the list of outsiders. The Daycare doesn't have a written policy on how it is run, ex. the costs, the age children will be taken into the daycare, or the way the waiting list works. The closest thing to a written policy of this sort is the pink pamphlet available from student services. What the daycare calls the policy just mentions things like holidays, storm days, etc. So where does it say students first?

On the very last line of the pink pamphlet it says "Students first, then staff" it is not stated in any other informational hand-out given out by the daycare. The application form for entrance into the daycare doesn't ask anywhere within the five pages of questions if the parent is a student or not. Is it really students first? Maybe, to some extent but let's look at some things not written in the pink pamphlet. Once a child is in the daycare that child is there until they are six years old or until the parents remove them from the daycare. This sounds fair until it is looked at closely. The daycare only takes thirty-five children (it is allowed by fire regulations to have 49 children). The daycare is operated during the summer also and if there is available spots they proceed to staff then to outsiders if necessary. [Remember once the child is in the daycare they are there until they turn six unless the parents remove the child.] also if a student graduates and has a child in the daycare then the child also stays until they are six. So when September rolls around the daycare is filled. In march, 1989, there was a story written in the Gem by Laura Leigh Kilfoil about the daycare. The figures stated in that story of the number of children in the daycare where, 19 children of students, 10 children of staff and 9 children of outsiders. A year and a half later (November 15, 1990) the figures are these 10 children of students, 10 children of staff, and 17 children of outsiders with 30-40 students on a waiting list trying to get their children in the daycare. How is this possible? What happened to students first?

In an interview with a student mother who is attending UPEI as a single, full-time student, and living on campus, she says that she can't get her child into the daycare because it is full. She is one of the 30-40 students on the waiting list. So while she is on a waiting list she is waiting for a spot to become available and paying the price for a