

gave: An eye doctor billing \$2 million would have 10%

get high-billing doctors under control. About 470 docs each

members of our profession," she told me in a telephone

profession. Individually, we know them as skilled



Child care cost hits Canadian wallets

ANTONELLA ARTUSO

Needless red tape and suppressed competition are some of the key factors driving up the cost of child care in Ontario, says Andrea Hannen, operators manager of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO),

A Growing Concern, a report on child care fees in the country's big cities — authored by David Macdonald and Martha Friendly and released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives — found that parents in

Toronto are paying on average \$19,788 a year for an infant child care space, the highest in the country.

Pre-school spots can set a parent back \$1,150 a month in Toronto, with Markham, Vaughan, Mississauga and Ottawa closing in on \$1,000 a month, the report says.

With the Justin Trudeau government promising to invest \$500 million in child care in next year's budget, the report notes that provinces that set fees as opposed to leaving them up to the market have the least expensive child

care.

The *Toronto Sun* asked Hannen about the skyrocketing fees:

What are the hidden factors that drive up child care costs?

"The one that most people are unaware of is municipal policies. So here in Ontario, municipalities administer a lot of the provincial funding that's allocated for child care and municipalities are allowed to add their own rules and regulations on top of the ones that are already enforced by the

Ministry of Education."

Why does that increase costs for operators?

"You may not just have to hit the provincial standard, you might have to hit the municipal standard as well in order to be allowed to operate in that municipality. As soon as you're adding new requirements on top of what's already required, of course, you're driving up the cost."

Do municipalities impact child care providers in other ways?

"Under the Child Care and Early Years Act,

municipalities are allowed to weigh in on whether or not a new licence should be issued ... This would typically happen without the awareness of the mayor or council. It's more of an administrative decision on the part of the municipality. The problem with that whole process is it's not transparent. If licensing and regulation are supposed to be the responsibility of the province, why should be the municipalities be weighing in on who gets a licence and who doesn't?"