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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1995

Acton pre-school programs may close

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

The Acton Co-operative Nursery School may close as all but a handful of its children plan to attend Junior Kindergarten programs at two Acton schools in September.

Two other organizations running pre-school programs in town are also concerned that they will lose kids to J.K. and are assessing their programs.

The Halton Board of Education will offer half-day J.K. classes at M.Z. Bennett and Robert Little Schools in September. There is no cost and children who will be 4-years-old in 1995 are eligible.

For parent and Co-op president Julia Roehrig, the J.K. issue is emotional and frustrating.

"I don't know if there will be a Co-op next year because J.K. is taking our business," Roehrig said in an interview Wednesday.

"We've crunched the numbers and need 27 kids to break even. So far, six parents have signed up for the fall and 24 of our kids are eligible for J.K."

Roehrig said she is also upset with the way the province is treating the Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) who work with pre-schoolers.

"I'm worried that the Co-op may close but I'm angry about how the staff are being handled. If I have to let our ECE Reta Philips go, she can't teach J.K. because she doesn't have her teachers certificate. And yet she is specifically trained to deal with that age group."

The Co-op, operating out of rented space at M.Z. Bennett, was started 15 years ago by Acton parents who wanted to be part of their pre-schooler's program.

Parents are required to help in the classes, which cost \$57 a month for two mornings a week.

Roehrig also questions what the higher teacher-child ratio in J.K. will mean for the kids.

"We feel we are better able to care for this age group because we have one adult looking after just eight kids. With J.K. the adult-child ratio is 1:24 and that will be tough on the teacher and the kids,"

Roehrig said.

"I've yet to find anyone who likes J.K. and the Co-op will not close without a fight."

The Co-op's board of directors is planning an advertising blitz to attract new children and has moved up the date for its Open House to

April 4.

The supervisor of the Town's Recreation and Parks pre-schooler See J.K., Page 2

'Dangerous' downtown sidewalks to be fixed

As soon as the weather improves the Town will begin sidewalk repairs to Acton's four corners intersection to repair "potentially dangerous situations."

The improvements are in answer to safety concerns voiced by Acton seniors who complain they could slide off icy sloping sidewalks onto the road.

An inspection showed the location needing the most work is the north-east corner of Mill and Main Streets by the parkette where there is a noticeable slope to the street.

Staff will widen the existing sidewalk and level the area for people to stand while waiting to

cross the street.

On the north-west corner staff note that the area in front of the pharmacy is very slippery and more sand should be used.

The sidewalks to the north of the intersection also slope to the street. To improve safety, staff will install a six inch step into the bowling alley and video store so the area can be reggraded.

Sidewalks on the south side of the intersection do not need work.

The Town will also review its plowing and sanding procedures and levels of service. They may increase the amount of sanding to improve pedestrian safety.



WATCH THAT TOE!

Young Megan Hillier, 5, eyes the pins at Acton Bowl before releasing her ball last Wednesday. Megan and 11 other 4 and 5-year-olds rolled a few frames as part of the Acton Co-op Nursery's annual Valentine's party. (Doug Harrison photo)



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