

## **Child Care Crunch in Bowman County**

Script from KQCD TV news on February 1, 2011

Parents across the state are facing a lack of child care, and it's leading to problems for employers as well. In Bowman, for those on waiting list at Tot Lot Child care, the wait is going to be long.

"Barring any people moving away or something like that, probably a year from this coming August," said Dee Dobitz, director of Tot Lot Child Care.

That wait may be too long for some parents who need consistent care for their children now.

"If I don't have daycare, I don't come to work, And I'm a business owner, so if I don't come to work, I don't make any money," said Jahner.

Dobitz says that she has to turn away parents on a weekly basis and that forces a lot of parents to go without a job.

"A lot of them aren't taking jobs that they've been offered, or that they are attempting to get," said Dobitz.

The problem may get worse for Bowman parents before it gets better because one child care is closing.

"We've classically gotten one to two calls per week and recently that has increased to three to four, partially because one of the providers in town is taking a break until fall," said Dobitz.

The child care crunch isn't just affecting day cares. Preschools are full, too.

"Two years ago I ran at a capacity of 16 children, and I have doubled my capacity each year, and I still probably have 10 to 15 people each session that I have to turn away," said Halleen.

Tot Lot is a nonprofit and is working with the community to try and generate funds to help build a new facility, which will allow them to care for more children, but that plan is still years out. So for now the parents will just have to keep looking. Child Care facility is limited to caring for 18 children at a time, but if the children are infants, that number drops.