

Advocates call for more affordable, licensed daycares following death of toddler ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Advocates are calling for a major overhaul to B.C.'s childcare system, following the death of a toddler inside an alleged daycare in East Vancouver.

The death of near 16-month-old Macallan Wayne Saini inside a home near Commercial Drive is still under investigation. But childcare advocates are already pointing the finger at what they call the province's troubled daycare system that forces many parents to seek unlicensed — and unregulated — child care alternatives.

"By comparison to other jurisdictions, our investment in childcare is low and pathetic," said Sharon Gregson, a spokesperson for the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.

The provincial government currently invests an estimated \$224 million to the childcare sector, accounting roughly 111,000 licensed childcare spaces.

But there's only enough space for a quarter of children aged five and under in the province, according to the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Gregson says finding a licensed space is hard for many parents, made all the more difficult by the high cost for care.

"If you're a parent and you're looking to put your two-year-old and four-year-old in child care anywhere in metro Vancouver, you could expect to pay ... \$2,200 a month," she said, adding that licensed spaces are a pipe dream for many low-income earners.

"The low income subsidy does not even pay remotely the full cost of child care, so low income families don't have that discretionary income to pay the top up," she said.

Unlicensed spaces

Gregson says the difficulties of finding space for children has thrust many parents into unlicensed spaces.

License-not-required child care spaces are only supposed to care for two children or a group of siblings at a time.

The spaces are not beholden to any government oversight or safety standards.

"While parents have the right to choose the options that works best for their families, those options simply don't exist. Families often don't ever get to experience what high quality childcare is really all about, and of course safety is part of quality."

It is still unclear whether the home Saini died in was a licensed childcare space or not, but Gregson says the province needs more affordable and licensed spaces, with safety standards improved across the board.

"You need a license to drive a car, you need a license to do tattooing. You surely should have license to be able to care for young children."

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Region: British Columbia ^[3]

Tags: affordability ^[4]

quality ^[5]

legislation and regulation ^[6]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/01/advocates-call-more-affordable-licensed-daycares-following-death> [2] <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/affordable-licensed-daycares-1.3955917> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/affordability> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>