

'I'm hoping that it will open some eyes': P.E.I. daycare operator starts petition to fight new regulations ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A daycare operator in P.E.I. who is concerned about changes to the Early Learning and Child Care Act is taking her complaint to the next level by starting a petition.

"I've shared it all over Facebook, and had friends share it and had friends of friends of friends share it," said Emily Ingram.

"I'm hoping that it will open some eyes at least."

1 infant per home daycare

The new act came into effect on Jan. 1 2017, after being passed in 2010. As part of the new regulations, home-based operators are only allowed to keep one infant, defined as a child under 22 months, if they have other children of mixed ages. That regulation includes the operators own children.

Previously, home-based operators were allowed to keep two children under 24 months.

Ingram said since first speaking out, more people have come out in support of her effort.

"A lot of people were shocked because not everybody knew about the regulations," she said

"I just heard so many people complain about it and talk about how strict the new regulations are, I figured somebody had to do something."

Hundreds of signatures

Since starting the petition about three weeks ago, it has already gotten over 600 signatures, which Ingram hopes sends a message to government.

"It should show them how many people are concerned about the new changes, and how many people it will affect," she said.

"It's not just the people who have signed it, there's tons and tons of people who are being affected by the changes and it's all negative effects."

Ingram hopes to reach 1,000 signatures, but said she will keep going until she feels there are enough to present it to the Department of Education and Early Learning.

Along with the regulations being reversed, Ingram said there needs to be a better explanation as to what the regulations and the penalties are, she said she has heard from many operators that they are having trouble making sense of the new rules.

Government is willing to work on it

The Department of Education and Early Learning said in an email that it is supportive of parents' right to choose where to send their child for daycare.

It said that these regulations are new, and that it is open to a dialogue with the operators around them.

The department said it will be taking a closer look at the regulations this summer to see if there are ways to improve ratios, remove barriers or if there are ways to make it easier to get a licence.

However the department said with these considerations it will always be putting the health and safety of the child first.

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