

B.C. government announces database for unlicensed daycare providers ^[1]

This new system allows parents to view inspections and complaints filed against all daycares

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

The B.C. government has introduced a bill that would give parents access to more information about who is caring for their kids.

The proposed changes would make inspection reports and complaints about unlicensed daycare providers, accessible online for a minimum of five years. That information is already available for licensed spaces.

Summaries of inspection reports and complaints will be posted in this new database, which will include the name of the operator and facility along with the address of the daycare, according to a government statement.

The move comes just over a year after the death of 15-month-old Macallan Saini, who died in an unlicensed facility in East Vancouver in January 2017.

Following that incident, it was revealed the daycare provider had multiple violations for caring for too many children, but was never fined.

"It's been a bittersweet day," said Kate Spence, a teacher and a mother of two, whose daughter attended the same daycare as Baby Mac.

"On the one hand I'm so excited and relieved and happy that this exists, but on the other hand... I don't know if this change would've happened if Mac had not passed away, so it's kind of a complicated day emotionally."

Deceptive daycare facilities

Spence feels that her family and others that chose this daycare were deceived by the operator and they had no reason to question the facility from its appearance.

"I think it's important to note that we weren't dropping our daughter off at a place that was dark and dirty and depressing ... having this system in place just allows you to see beyond what you're presented with," she told On The Coast's Gloria Macarenko.

She said this will offer another level of transparency and peace of mind for parents across the province who try to do their homework when vetting a daycare for their children.

"It's already anxiety inducing enough dropping your kid off somewhere," she said.

Enforcement and funding

Minister of Health Adrian Dix called the bill 'modest but important,' and firmly addressed that new system doesn't take away from the government's responsibility to enforce legislation.

"Ensuring that people have access to information doesn't change that responsibility, it's absolutely our determination as a province to ensure that laws are enforced and that people operating in violation of those rules... cease to do so," Dix said.

The province has added \$2.09 million to the existing child-care initiative, which will allow the Ministry of Health to hire more licensing officers to inspect and monitor care facilities.

People can access the information on health authority websites, which are anticipated to be updated and running by fall 2018.

[Audio clip available online ^[2]: "New database for unlicensed daycare providers in B.C. offers peace of mind for parents"]

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