

Growing concern over proposed changes to child care regulations ^[1]

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Excerpt

At a time when child care is top of mind for many Manitoba families, early childhood educators are voicing concern about proposed changes to regulations.

One move the Manitoba government is considering is moving re-licensing from a one year to a three year cycle. That possible change worries M.J. Farrow, the executive director of Stars of Promise Inc., a child care centre in East-Kildonan.

"Right now they come out once a year," said Farrow on Thursday. "They make sure we got our first aid, they make sure we have all the things so that we're offering quality day care."

The province is also proposing fees for unapproved spaces, which would allow programs to charge more than the maximum daily rate, as well as repealing enhanced nursery school funding, and replacing the term "early childhood educator" with "child care worker."

"If they change it to 'child care worker', what's that going to do?" said Farrow. "We don't have to hire people that have an education, I can just hire anybody?"

Executive Director of the Manitoba Child Care Association, Jodie Kehl said a pandemic isn't the right time to be conducting a significant review of regulations.

"I think we just really want to preserve the integrity and quality of the regulations that have served Manitobans' children and families for over 40 years," said Kehl.

She said it's unfair to expect people to review the proposed changes, while many are focused on trying to maintain the safety and health of children and staff.

When asked about the proposed changes to re-licensing, a spokesperson for Family Minister Heather Stefanson told CTV:

"This change would remove a significant burden for facilities that have a proven track record of meeting licensing requirements. It would also help ensure more focus is provided to centres that need support in meeting expectations and requirements."

Farrow said she doesn't feel supported by the province and that she is worried about the future of child care in Manitoba.

"Daycare is important, if you don't have daycare, I'm sorry but nobody is going to go to work."

A rally has been planned to protest the proposed changes. It's set to take place Aug. 20 in front of the legislature.

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