

Police investigate allegations against staff at Calgary daycare ^[1]

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Excerpts

Around two months after being closed for health violations, an inner city daycare in Calgary has now had its licence capacity reduced after several recent inspections revealed two dozen non-compliance concerns.

Sunvalley Kids Montessori Daycare([opens in a new tab](#)) on 2 Street S.W. was temporarily closed by Alberta Health Services in February, after an inspection uncovered nearly two dozen health violations, including cockroaches in the kitchen.

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“The violations are concerning as well as the span of time that they’ve taken over. There has been a considerable amount of resources at this location to bring this centre up to speed and it seems like a lot of those issues are motivated by parent complaints,” said Susan Cake with Child Care Now Alberta, a non-profit group that advocates for publicly-funded childcare.

“So, if parents weren’t complaining, I don’t know that we’d be finding those violations.”

The violations under the Early Learning and Child Care Act included failing to follow health and safety requirements, minimum staffing levels and ratios to children, reporting incidents in a correct manner to the director and child guidance concerns.

“Child guidance is a category violation where essentially the daycare is not interacting with children in a manner that is safe or appropriate for the children. So, when you see a violation like this then it’s an indicator usually the children are not receiving quality childcare,” said Cake.

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Chisholm immediately pulled his son from the program and reported his concerns to the daycare, police and the province.

The Calgary Police Service confirmed it investigated the daycare, but no charges were laid.

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“To ensure the safety of children attending the program, we continue to monitor the Sunvalley Kids Montessori program and the enforcement of the child safety plan which included temporarily reducing the program’s licenced capacity. Closing the program is not being considered at this time,” the province said.

The daycare owner, Max Nizamov, denies the allegations made against his staff, that he was ever made aware of them before they were made to police and believes the claims are the outcome of a disgruntled worker.

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Pattern of non-compliance

Inspections at a second Sunvalley Kids Montessori in Acadia, which is also owned by Nizamov, resulted in 18 non-compliance concerns since February 2023, with the most recent on March 27, 2024.

Of particular concern for childcare advocates is non-compliance of child guidance which is described in the inspection as, “Inflict physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation.”

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She says the violations at both locations under the same ownership point to a pattern of problems and what role the province plays in enforcing regulations at licensed facilities.

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Under the province's Early Learning and Child Care Act, all licensed child-care programs are inspected twice annually. Any program found in non-compliance is monitored and inspected until it returns to compliance.

There are no fines for programs found in non-compliance.

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