

Activists urge freeze on daycare licences [CA-ON]^[1]

Toronto Star

Author: Monsebraaten, Laurie

Source: Toronto Star

Format: Article

Publication Date: 3 Mar 2008

AVAILABILITY

See text below

EXCERPTS

Queen's Park should impose a short-term moratorium on new child-care licences to prevent a multinational corporation from gobbling up centres across the province, advocates say.

The move would be both lawful and prudent, said lawyer Steven Shrybman of Sack Goldblatt Mitchell LLP, in a legal opinion released this week for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

As reported in the Star last October, dozens of commercial daycare operators in Ontario received letters from an American firm acting on behalf of a "large financial/child care group" asking if they would be interested in selling their centres.

The group, Oakville-based 123 Busy Beavers Learning Centres Inc., is connected to Australia's ABC Learning Centres, the largest publicly traded daycare corporation in the world, often criticized for cutting quality to raise profits.

...

Whether it's a company linked to ABC Learning or another foreign multinational looking to expand into Ontario, advocates here are worried about the "Wal-Martization" of child care at a time when the province is planning full-day early learning for 4- and 5-year-olds.

Children's Minister Deb Matthews said she is monitoring the situation.

"It's of concern to me," she said in an interview. "But ... my biggest concerns are quality and accessibility. ... I'm not afraid of them. I think our quality standards are so high that they would have trouble being successful here," she said.

Many municipalities that deliver child-care subsidies on behalf of the province, including Toronto, don't give wage subsidies to for-profit operators, a factor likely to dissuade a multinational child-care corporation from investing here, she added.

Shrybman said the moratorium could be narrowly crafted to prevent existing centres from being amassed by a big-box chain without otherwise interfering with the issuance of new licences or renewals.

The move would give the ministry time to update the 60-year-old Day Nurseries Act to reflect the new understanding of the importance of the early years and the phenomenon of foreign daycare corporations, said child-care researcher Martha Friendly.

"I don't think anyone envisioned people getting rich on child care when the act was written after the Second World War," she said.

...

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Australia and New Zealand^[2]

Tags: privatization^[3]

legislation and regulation^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/03/activists-urge-freeze-daycare-licences-ca>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/03/activists-urge-freeze-daycare-licences-ca> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/australia-and-new-zealand> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/privatization> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>