

# Fire drill day care ordered to close [CA-AB] <sup>[1]</sup>

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AVAILABILITY  
See text below.

## EXCERPTS

A Calgary day care that sent shoeless children outside in -30 C weather has been ordered closed by Child and Family Services.

The department's investigation, prompted by calls from concerned parents, concluded with notification being given to the owners of Treehouse Child Development Centre that their licence had been cancelled. The centre must close within 30 days.

Tom Rosettis, spokesman for Calgary and Area Child and Family Services, said the owners have 30 days to file an appeal, which would be heard by an appointed board prior to the centre's closing date.

The incident that sparked the investigation occurred last week, when the day-care operators chose to punish some of the children -- who had forgotten indoor shoes -- by holding an extra fire drill. The temperature outside that day was -30 C, although the wind chill made it feel more like -40 C.

Investigators found that up to 25 children were involved, while the day-care owners maintained that only 16 had been sent out. The children were not allowed to put on coats before the Jan. 26 drill, which is the normal procedure in the monthly fire drills required by Child and Family Services.

Mike Pippus, the grandfather of one of the children sent outside, was pleased to hear the day care would close.

He said his granddaughter was lucky to have slippers on at the time of the drill, but she told him some of the children didn't even have socks on.

"The whole thing was ludicrous. They don't deny that this was done to punish the children. What if some of the kids had outgrown their indoor shoes, and the family couldn't afford to replace them until spring?" Pippus said.

Lorelei Fiset-Cassidy, spokeswoman for Alberta Children's Services, said there had been other violations of child-care standards at the centre, although she would not elaborate.

She said remedial action is usually the first step, but can only occur when day-care operators comply. She said that in the past four years, 28 day cares had been closed in Alberta by revocation or non-renewal of their licences.

- reprinted from the Calgary Herald

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** quality <sup>[3]</sup>

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<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health>

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