

Questions raised over Saskatchewan daycare [CA-SK] ^[1]

CBC Saskatchewan

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EXCERPTS

As children begin their return to school in Saskatchewan, questions are being raised about the care of pre-schoolers.

Only a small number of day-care locations in Saskatchewan are licensed, and there are no rules or regulations for nursery schools and pre-schools.

"They're not checked at all," says Martha Friendly of the Childcare Research Unit at the University of Toronto. "If you look at child-care centre regulations, they're basic health and safety. And those regulations are considered to be the floor. They way they always put it is, below this, children's well-being could be threatened."

Friendly says every other province except Quebec keeps tabs on its preschools.

A new federal-provincial daycare program is in the works. But the federal money is contingent on provinces meeting a set of principles controlling day-care centres.

Friendly says Saskatchewan will likely miss out on much of that money because so few of its child-care facilities are licensed. "The feds were absolutely determined that the money should only go for regulated child care, which would include nursery schools in most parts of Canada," says Friendly. "But in Saskatchewan's case, they [preschools] don't fall into that."

"It's a given that the money is only to be used for regulated early care programs."

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