

Day care policing under review [CA-NB] ^[1]

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Source: Telegraph-Journal

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 Jul 2003

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

The Department of Family and Community Services is reviewing how provincial inspectors in New Brunswick inspect day cares.

The review could change why inspections are done, how they're followed up, and what might trigger them.

Normally, inspectors will inspect day cares four times a year, once during the licence renewal process, and a minimum of three times a year for surprise spot checks.

The review might provide fresh standards for inspections and surprise visits, and create a system that tracks how well individual day cares follow orders. It would also ensure that a similar infraction cited in Miramichi or Saint John, for example, would be dealt with in the same way.

In documents obtained through Access to Information, for example, one Saint John day care was cited several times by inspectors for issues such as driving children around without parents' knowledge or permission, allowing two large dogs to roam free, and having incomplete paperwork required by law.

Although some such infractions were noted several times, no more drastic action was taken by the department, other than ordering the day care to stop transporting children under any circumstances.

Under changes, violations would have standard responses from the department.

Right now, legislation directs day-care inspectors to work with day-care operators until all safety standards and regulations are met. Inspectors have been giving day cares orders to make changes, and time frames to comply, on a case-by-case basis.

Darlene Cromwell, the past president of the Saint John Daycare Association, strongly supports tight regulations for day cares. She said she's aware that some day cares don't adhere to what she calls strict regulations.

Ms. Cromwell is also calling for a review of how the province funds day cares that accept children through provincial assistance programs.

"Day cares are hampered by government subsidies. There's no profit in day care, unless they're charging a lot of fees. There are profitable day cares that do try to make money, and in order to make (money) they have to lower standards," she said.

-Reprinted from The Telegraph-Journal

Region: New Brunswick ^[2]

Tags: legislation and regulation ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/03/08/day-care-policing-under-review-ca-nb>
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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/03/08/day-care-policing-under-review-ca-nb> [2]

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