

Province eases stance on locking daycares says it will review individual cases, provide funds ^[1]

Author: Rollason, Kevin

Source: Winnipeg Free Press

Format: Article

Publication Date: 18 May 2010

AVAILABILITY

See text below

EXCERPTS

A security policy that requires all daycares and nursery schools to lock their doors at all times is being clarified by the provincial government.

Family Services Minister Gord Mackintosh said Monday that letters are going out to the province's 600 daycare centres to ensure they know they have until next year to implement new security features, including locked doors, intercoms and buzzers to let people in.

Mackintosh said the province will provide the expertise to daycares to show them what they will need to meet the policy. And he said daycares will receive funding to install the security measures.

"Since they must have locks (on doors) the idea was to use them when the wee ones were inside," he said. "We want children outside getting fresh air, going to libraries... it's just to use the locks when they're inside."

But Mackintosh said the government recognizes that many of the daycares are in buildings they don't own -- like schools -- which have "elaborate methods of entry" so it might be difficult or impossible to comply.

"There are no consequences to being late. We will analyze the barriers and the cost which the province will fund," he said.

A provincial spokeswoman also said there are no penalties if it turns out an individual daycare would never be able to comply with the policy.

But that's not what the March 15, 2010, letter sent out by the province to the daycares said.

The letter, from Lois Speirs, the acting director of the Manitoba Child Care Program, said "effective one year from now on April 1, 2011, all child care centres will be required to have a locked door policy."

The letter said the daycares had to submit an interim plan for controlling visitor access within two weeks and a transition plan for compliance by June 1.

In bold print, the letter stated: "Carefully review the information sheet and follow the steps applicable to your centre to ensure compliance at this time."

It also says elsewhere that "if a locked door policy is not immediately possible at your centre, you will be required to submit a transition plan by June 1, 2010, outlining how your centre will come

into compliance by April 1, 2011.

Nowhere in the letter does it mention that the province would be willing to pay for the security improvements at individual daycares.

Don Giesbrecht, president of the Canadian Child Care Federation and executive director of the Assiniboine Children's Centre, located in Ecole Assiniboine in St. James, said daycares wouldn't have made the new security measures an issue if the province had said in March what it is saying now.

"It sounds a lot better now," Giesbrecht said.

"The province now says they're going to work with us, but everything we had was to have it in place by the end of April 2011. They never said they would work with us and there might be dollars."

Giesbrecht, whose daycare is spread on different floors and at different ends of the school, said it would cost about \$20,000 to put in place the security system the province is talking about, and that would have come at the expense of programs it runs.

"No one is saying it's not a good idea," he said.

"But you need your landlord to say yes and it is still a big chunk in our budget."

...

-reprinted from the Winnipeg Free Press

Region: Manitoba ^[2]

Tags: quality ^[3]

physical environment ^[4]

legislation and regulation ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/05/province-eases-stance-locking-daycares-says-it-will-review>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/05/province-eases-stance-locking-daycares-says-it-will-review> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7857> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/quality> [4]

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