

# Lessons from baby's daycare death? <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

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To quote Stephen Harper when he decimated the national daycare strategy in 2005: "The Conservative plan for families will help parents find that balance... Parents can spend the money however they wish. You can choose the child-care option that best suits your family's needs," Harper said.

"It's hard enough to be a parent. But government should help parents with choices not limit them," Harper said. "In fact, the only people who should be making these choices are parents, not politicians, not the government."

Chalk up another one for a prime minister intent on destroying the institutions, regulations and programs designed to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

David Neufeld, Aurora

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The tragic events that took place in the unregulated child care home sends a strong signal to all of us about the critical job of caring for and teaching our children. One of the most frequent conversations in my private practice, as an instructor in the Early Childhood Education department at Ryerson University, former senior management staff at the City of Toronto and home regulator for a private home agency, is about how to ensure the safety and quality of care for children.

This tragic event hopefully will force all of us, whether we are parents, caregivers, neighbours, friends, to take responsibility for ensuring children are taken care of in a safe, loving and stimulating environment, regardless of whether it is a regulated or unregulated program (I have seen both amazing and poor care in both).

Caring for our children is the most important job in the world. It sets the stage for who they become as adults.

This is a perfect example of why it "takes a village to raise a child." Working together, rather than pointing fingers, we can find a solution to ensure this type of tragedy never happens again. Let's all make sure it never does.

Susan T. Howson, President, Magnificent Creations Limited, Port Credit

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Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky's comments are unacceptable. It is the government's job to protect its citizens, especially the most vulnerable.

There are thousands of parents who "are paying attention." Many who prefer licensed care, qualify for subsidy, and are waiting for the government to give them a space. The current licensed system is in danger of collapsing due to lack of funding, and there is no capital money to start new programs. It is the costs of quality care that forces parents to seek non-licensed alternatives.

If the government really cares, it is they who should pay attention. Publicly funded and regulated early childhood education options should be provided to every child in Ontario.

We had to fight for public schools. I hope parents, grandparents, and anyone who loves children will fight for them now.

Janet Teibo, Toronto

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- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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unregulated [9]

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