

For-profit daycare to partner with apartment landlord ^[1]

Author: Hasham, Alyshah

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EXCERPTS:

A for-profit daycare provider based in Calgary is expanding into the GTA with plans for at least two new centres located in apartment buildings.

Edleun Group Inc, is partnering with apartment rental giant, Canadian Apartment Properties Real Estate Trust (Capreit), to convert underutilized spaces in the buildings into child care centres.

"We are anticipate the response from parents to be strong," said Edleun's president and CEO Ty Durekas in a press release.

The company has locations in Alberta and British Columbia and announced their move into Ontario in December.

About 26 per cent of the province's daycare are for-profit, up from 23 per cent in 2009.

However, the arrival of "big-box child care" in Ontario has some daycare experts concerned.

Research shows for-profit daycares provide inferior care for young children then non-profit or public programs.

"It's completely new development in Ontario and Canada - child care operated as a big business. If it follows the pattern that it has in other countries, it will take over," said Martha Friendly, the executive director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

"If it takes off in Ontario, I think we're all going to be really sorry," she said.

Edleun has links with Australia's failed ABC Learning Centres. The massive childcare conglomerate became known for poor quality and high fees.

Edleun started a year and a half ago and provides 4,641 licensed spaces in early childhood learning and care centres. The publicly-traded company has already acquired three Montessori locations with 485 child-care spaces in Windsor for \$5.5 million.

Instead of for-profit child care, Friendly would like to see public policy on child care, and some involvement from the federal government which cancelled a national child-care program exactly six years ago on Monday.

The non-profit daycare in the province is in crisis, struggling with provincial underfunding, municipal cuts and the introduction of all-day kindergarten.

-reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: privatization ^[3]

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