

Improve daycare supervision rules, coroners say ^[1]

Author: CBC News

Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 3 Dec 2012

EXCERPTS:

Coroners appearing before the inquest into the drowning death of an Ottawa toddler urged tighter rules around pool safety and supervision of children at day cares.

Jérémie Audette drowned in a backyard pool in 2010 while on an outing with his unlicensed daycare provider.

Audette and 30 other children had been taken to the home of another daycare provider for a party when the daughter of the homeowner found him at the bottom of their outdoor pool.

Roger Skinner, the regional supervising coroner for eastern Ontario, had a number of recommendations for making daycares safer, including reducing the number of children one day care provider can be responsible for, requiring consent forms when kids go on outings and requiring daycares to have CPR training and first aid tools on site.

Skinner said parents expect daycares to be equally safe, so he said either all daycares should be licensed, or all daycares, including unlicensed daycares, should be made safer.

Deputy Chief Coroner Bert Lauwers said it would be untenable to license all daycares, given how many children are in more informal home care settings with grandparents and other relatives looking after them.

"I think the key message that arises from Jérémie's death is the need for supervision, with direct visual supervision, and in particular in the face of drowning being within the length of an arm away from a child," said Lauwers.

Both Skinner and Lauwers also suggested having four-sided enclosures and self-locking gates around private pools would help prevent drowning deaths, particularly with young children.

-reprinted from CBC News

Region: Ontario ^[2]

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