

Waitlists force Winnipeg parents to seek unlicensed daycare ^[1]

Long wait lists for licensed spots leave parents seeking care from unlicensed daycares

Author: CBC News

Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 31 May 2013

EXCERPTS:

Long waitlists for child care are forcing many Manitoba parents to turn to unlicensed centres - facilities that aren't monitored or regulated by the government.

Winnipeg parent Amanda Kipe is one of them.

"The one problem I've had is with the licensed daycares, when you're phoning them, I've found spots two years later," said Kipe.

"That's not an option when you have to go back to work."

More than 10,000 children are waiting for licensed care in the province, part of millions across Canada with no access to licensed child care.

Only an estimated 20 per cent of Canadian children have access to licensed care.

But unlicensed centres come with risks. On Thursday, Winnipeg police announced they laid charges against a 33-year-old operator of a child care centre in St. Vital.

A parent discovered their child and five others were left unattended for over an hour at the unlicensed centre.

The executive director of the Manitoba Child Care Association, Pat Wege, said unlicensed facilities can't guarantee workers have had criminal background checks, child abuse registry checks or have the necessary First Aid or CPR training.

The only rule unlicensed centres have to follow is having no more than four children in the centre at a time.

So parents like Kipe are forced to do their own inspections.

"I got references, so I phoned a few people, met some of the parents and spent the day there with my daughter," she said.

There are thousands of unlicensed centres in Manitoba, and the provincial government acknowledged it needs to keep better tabs on the centres.

Earlier this year, the auditor general released a report on child care, urging the province to do a better job educating people who run home daycares about licensing requirements. The report also recommended periodically searching for unlicensed facilities that should have licenses.

"We are working very diligently on each and every recommendation in the report," said Marg Ferniuk, the director of Manitoba government's child care program.

Ferniuk said it has hired an investigator to look into complaints about unlicensed daycares - 53 of which were made in the last year.

But parent Julie Bell said she isn't sure who to call or where to go if she were to have a problem with her unlicensed child-care provider.

"I wouldn't know what to do actually. Being not licensed, I don't know if there is any recourse or not," she said.

There is a 24-hour tip line available for concerned parents, but the number is difficult to find and buried deep into a provincial website.

Provincial officials said they're working to update that information and make it easier for parents to find.

-reprinted from CBC News

Related link: Winnipeg parent finds 6 kids left alone at St. Vital daycare ^[2]

Region: Manitoba ^[3]

Tags: unregulated ^[4]

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/13/06/waitlists-force-winnipeg-parents-seek-unlicensed-daycare> [2]

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-parent-finds-6-kids-left-alone-at-st-vital-daycare-1.1343937> [3]

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