

Daycare operators warn about increasing teacher-child ratio ^[1]

Author: Armstrong, James

Source: Global News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 5 Mar 2014

EXCERPTS:

Some daycare operators are warning parents that proposed changes to provincial legislation governing how many toddlers can be in a group could create unsafe environments.

Kristi Bovaconti, a supervisor at Toronto-based daycare Pat Schulz Child Care Centre, said changing the ratio of early childhood educators to children could also lower the quality of care.

"You put in a one-to-five [ratio] at the ages of one to two years. So now you're looking at safety," she said. "They're still babies. Some one-year-olds aren't even walking yet."

The provincial government is considering changing the ratio of daycare workers to children across the province. For children 12 to 18 months old, the ratio would increase from the current one teacher for every three children, increasing the group size from 10 to 15.

And from kids 24 to 30 months old, the ratio would increase from one teacher for every five children to one teacher for every eight and the group size will increase to 24.

"If these ratios are implemented, that quality of care is actually going to be knocked down," Bovaconti said.

Education Minister Liz Sandals said the proposed changes are a potential fix to the blunted numbers in daycares as the older children moved on to full day kindergarten.

"We understood that when you took the four and five year olds in the existing child cares and put them in the school systems that that was going to create challenges for the daycare operators who lost some of their clients," Sandals told Global News at Queen's Park. "And we committed to looking at the adult child ratios in the sector."

She also welcomed feedback, suggesting that's why they placed the proposed changes on the regulatory website.

But Martha Friendly, the director of the Child Care Resource and Research Unit, said the problem created for daycares by the implementation of full day kindergarten can't be fixed by "shoving more kids into childcare."

"This is completely inconsistent with what the research says about the ratios and class sizes you should have with young children," she said. "Envision children who are in diapers, who aren't walking and you know they can sort of feed themselves but they throw the food around a lot and need a lot of help."

Friendly admitted it will open more spaces for parents in Ontario who are desperately seeking childcare but added "there is no way that it can be argued that this would be good-quality childcare."

Sandals is welcoming criticism though and claimed the province is open to "fine tuning."

"We're absolutely committed to having a look at these and if we need to fine tune them were willing to do some find tuning. But we do need to find some sort of compromise to move forward," she said. "And that's what we're trying to do, try to find a compromise that will work for people."

-reprinted from Global News

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: legislation and regulation ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/03/daycare-operators-warn-about-increasing-teacher-child-ratio>

Links
[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/03/daycare-operators-warn-about-increasing-teacher-child-ratio> [2]
<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>