

Cobequid Children's Centre closed without warning^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Financial problems may have led to the Cobequid Children's Centre daycare in Lower Sackville, N.S., closing without notice Monday, leaving parents scrambling for care.

Staff and parents arrived at 7 a.m. as usual, but the door was locked. Parents and staff said they did not receive any warning phone calls or emails.

The centre's answering machine was last updated in March.

Stephanie Malley works at the centre. She turned up for work Monday to learn she is apparently out of work.

In retrospect, she finds her employers' behaviour last week odd.

"We were cleaning. They said the health inspector is coming on Monday, so I was scrubbing baseboards, I was scrubbing walls. Meanwhile, it was for a getaway that they didn't fill me in about," she said Monday.

Some parents stopped payments of uncashed cheques Monday. Many of the parents had to re-arrange their schedules this morning and find someone to look after their children.

Kaitlyn Monroe brought her 18-month-old daughter Adrian Dawn to the daycare Monday morning.

"No notice. I mean a lot of us work full time and have to scramble to find more child care. They're down permanently and there's going to be a lot of us looking for childcare," she said.

Parent Amy Howe said the owners began asking for post-dated cheques last month.

"It's a little bit shocking and I'm sure everybody's in the same position. [You have] a lot of questions that you don't have answers too and it makes your mind wander into areas you don't want to go," she said. "Especially when you're talking about your child's care. It's the most important thing out there."

120 days' notice required

CBC News is trying to contact the owners of the centre to hear their side of the story. The Cobequid Road centre had nine staff who looked after 45 children.

The Department of Education administers the Day Care Act, but staff there have also been unable to reach the owners.

Spokeswoman Shelley Thompson said the department assumes the problem is financial.

"We were aware a few weeks ago that they were having some difficulty. They were afraid they wouldn't be able to make their rent," she said.

But a daycare is supposed to give 120 days' notice before closing, she added. The notice must be mailed to parents and posted at the centre.

The department's Twitter feed is asking for affected parents and daycares in the area to contact them to help find daycare for the parents. It also posted a sign on the daycare's door telling parents to contact them at 424-6679 if they need help finding other care.

-reprinted from CBC News

Region: Nova Scotia^[2]

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