

Quebec daycare safety review launched after sex crime case ^[1]

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Source: CBC News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 12 May 2015

AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Quebec Family Minister Francine Charbonneau has ordered a review of safety rules for all daycares after a CBC Radio-Canada investigation of a West Island daycare where a four-year-old girl was the victim of a sex crime.

Charbonneau on Tuesday also ordered an internal investigation of the Pierrefonds daycare.

She called the story "nightmarish," and said she has asked the local co-ordinating office responsible for the daycare to shut it down temporarily as it conducts the internal investigation.

Danny Carroll and Jennifer van Rantwyk told Radio-Canada the story of how their four-year-old daughter was victimized last October while at the daycare.

A 13-year-old visitor to the daycare eventually pleaded guilty to gross indecency charges related to the incident in the basement of the daycare. The daycare operator was upstairs preparing a meal at the time.

The couple complained to the local co-ordinating office, which eventually concluded the daycare operator was negligent.

But the daycare was allowed to remain open. As well, the parents of other children at the daycare were not told about the incident.

Charbonneau said in the National Assembly that she found the report "extremely troubling."

"I have asked the ministry to launch an internal investigation to review the entire process, starting with the parents' complaint," Charbonneau said.

She said it's also time to review safety rules for all daycares in the province.

"We have to review all of our rules to reassure ourselves that every day there is no parent who is worried about leaving their child at a daycare."

Jennifer van Rantwyk said in an interview with CBC News Thursday that she was pleased the minister seemed to be taking her complaint seriously.

"To finally get some response, and some semblance of severity, I was very happy," van Rantwyk said.

But she said it shouldn't have taken this long.

"The system failed us. Failed my daughter. To now come out and say 'we are apalled and we are troubled' - it is what it is. I don't know why it had to take seven months to come to that decision, but they did come to what I think is a fair decision."

Region: Quebec ^[3]

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