

Background paper on unregulated child care for the Home child care: More than a home project ^[1]



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Description:

Home-based child care - More than a home was a project of Campaign 2000 supported by the Metcalf Foundation's Inclusive Local Economies Program. The goal of this project was to articulate stakeholder-agreed recommendations to improve the safety, security and quality of unregulated home child care; to identify or develop practical solutions; and to develop a consensus on a strategy to pursue these solutions. The desired outcome of the project was "to improve the situation for children and their families as well as for child care providers in both regulated and unregulated settings".


The project plan included this background paper, outreach and convening community roundtable sessions with unregulated child care providers and a roundtable with practitioners and policymakers all held in Toronto. An online, non-randomized survey of unregulated home child care providers was also conducted.

This background paper aimed to support the project by offering an overview of the current landscape of unregulated child care in Ontario and other Canadian jurisdictions, identifying important issues in home child care through a review of the research literature, and summarizing key recommendations that have emerged from the academic and policy literature.

Throughout most of the course of this project, legal unregulated child care had been permitted in a variety of settings and by a variety of kinds of operators in Ontario. There were historically a number of circumstances in which legal unregulated child care operated because neither the legislation nor regulations specified that a "home" care setting must be the provider's home; this is similar to what is allowed in most other provinces/territories (see Table 2). Unregulated centre-like operations that were open before 1993 were operated by private schools (not limited in size) and unregulated storefront child care was allowed to operate so long as there are fewer than the maximum number of children. Originally, some (not all) of these loopholes were to have been closed by Bill 143, which died with the 2014 Ontario election. When the June 2014 election was won by the Liberals, Bill 143 was re-introduced as Bill 10 and, following several sessions of public hearings at Committee Stage, was passed by the legislature in November 2014.

It should be noted that while Bill 10 addresses a number of specific concerns about the operation of unregulated child care (such as grandparented operation by private schools), there is no specification that it be operated in the provider's own home, or even that it be in a home setting. Thus, unregulated child care may still be operated in a rented house, apartment, office space or storefront, making the term "unregulated home child care" less than accurate in some circumstances.

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