

Regina daycare centres fight property tax change ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Several Regina daycare centres say they have seen a dramatic change in their property taxes after they were reclassified as commercial properties, rather than residential ones.

Cathedral Area Co-operative Daycare was one of five daycare centres affected by the change, which has been implemented by the City of Regina.

Board president Colleen Schmidt said property taxes at the Cathedral centre had doubled to almost \$8,000 since it was reclassified.

"This kind of a tax burden is really crippling," said Schmidt.

"It's not doing anything to help us provide quality childcare, and it's really detrimental for childcare, province-wide."

Ducky Day Care Centre Co-operative, Rink Avenue Daycare Cooperative, Normanview Daycare and Whitmore Park Child Care Co-operative were also reclassified as commercial properties.

These daycares were all operating out of houses.

Schmidt also said that the taxation of daycares across the province is a "patchwork", as some daycares pay property tax while others are exempt.

Gerry Krismer, the assistant city assessor for the City of Regina, said that he does not think there is a discrepancy across the city in how daycares are taxed.

"Daycares as a use are not exempt. It falls to the property owner typically," said Krismer.

He said that daycares that operate out of schools are exempt because the building is owned by school divisions and are used for school use.

Krismer said that daycares in school serve students of the school with things like before and after school programs, and are not open to the general public.

Four of the five centres, which are all operated out of homes, appealed the change to the City's Board of Revision, but they were unsuccessful.

Some of the daycares are continuing to appeal the property tax to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, whose mandate is to "exercise discretion of a regulatory and judicial nature".

Krismer said that he can only apply an exemption that is set out in legislation by the provincial government, and currently daycares are not listed to be exempt from taxation.

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