

Unlicensed daycare operator charged in toddler death ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A Calgary family says they are thankful that police have charged an unlicensed daycare operator in connection with the death of their 18-month-old girl.

Calgary police have charged Elmarie Simons, 57, with criminal negligence causing death.

Police say they responded to a call of an infant in trouble on Nov. 12, 2015. Baby Ceira Lynn McGrath was pronounced dead in hospital.

"We still struggle every day and can't believe our daughter and sister has been taken from us," reads a written statement from parents Tanya Gladwell and Ryan McGrath and Ciera's twin brother Colby.

"This type of cruelty towards a vulnerable child is unthinkable," the statement goes on.

"However, we are pleased today and thankful for the tireless work of the Calgary Police service that at least brings some accountability in her passing," the family added. "Our trust was ultimately betrayed."

The statement goes on to say that "healthy little children simply do not die for no reason."

Months ago, Simons told CTV Calgary that Ceira was fussy and refused to nap in a playpen, so she was placed in a car seat to sleep, a practice that The Canadian Pediatric Society advises against.

McGrath told CTV Calgary in January that he and Gladwell believe their baby girl's death was preventable. "Had we been aware she was being put into car seats for naps, we would have yanked her out of there immediately," said the grieving father.

Gladwell added that she and McGrath had tried to find licensed daycare for their twins, but were unable to due to a shortage of child care spaces.

The family said in their statement Thursday that they "miss Ceira more than (they) can even express, and maybe now we can finally start to begin enjoying her smile and laugh again in photos and videos, and have some closure, or knowledge it's coming soon."

-reprinted from CTV News

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