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Baby's death while in unlicensed child care a wake-up call: Ontarians deserve safe and affordable child care

(TORONTO) – In the wake of last week's tragic death of 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen, while in unlicensed child care in Mississauga, the OFL is calling for a Coroner's inquiry and government action. Lack of sufficient regulation and public funding puts many children at risk.

"Baby Duy-An's death in unlicensed child care is a tragedy that no family should endure and our hearts go out to them," said Marie Kelly, Secretary-Treasurer of the Ontario Federation of Labour. "We hope that this wake-up call will cause the Ontario Government to introduce appropriate security measures and safeguards in all child care facilities."

The safest and ideal child care option for parents is a licensed and regulated environment but high fees and long waiting lists leave many parents with no other choice than informal child care. In Ontario, only 20 per cent of young children today have access to a regulated space. Without subsidies like those in Manitoba and Québec, that reduce fees to affordable levels, Ontario parents pay an average of \$40 a day for each child. At this rate, child care fees can be greater than \$10,000 a year and are often the second highest expense for young families.

The OFL is calling for a Coroner's inquiry into the death of Duy-An Nguyen and a full investigation into the systemic conditions that leave parents with no choice other than unlicensed and unregulated child care facilities.

"The death of any child deserves a full investigation but when it is the system that has let us down, we need full answers and appropriate policy changes," said Kelly. "Ontario needs a properly funded and fully-regulated child care system, in order to ensure that no other family is faced with this tragedy."

The OFL represents 54 unions and one million workers. It is Canada's largest provincial labour federation and a member of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC).

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