

July 12, 2013

André Marin  
Ombudsman of Ontario  
Bell Trinity Square  
483 Bay Street, 10th Floor, South Tower  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

Dear Mr. Marin,

I am writing to request that you conduct an investigation into the adequacy of the Government of Ontario's protection of children in unlicensed child care operations.

As you know, on July 9<sup>th</sup>, a two-year old died in an unlicensed home-based child care centre located in Vaughan. The centre was found to be in violation of the *Day Nurseries Act*. In addition, it had at least one other violation in the past year, and was the subject of at least two complaints which were not acted on by the Ministry of Education. Minister Sandals admitted last night in a statement that "the ministry did not respond to all previous complaints made against this unlicensed provider, as is the normal policy of the ministry."

<http://news.ontario.ca/edu/en/2013/07/ministers-statement-on-childs-death.html>

Mr. Marin, the Minister's admission of her government's negligence in following up on these complaints is appalling. Unfortunately, this is not the first time a child has died in an unlicensed child care setting in Ontario. In January 2011, a 14-month-old baby died after being shaken to death by an unlicensed Mississauga daycare operator. In 2010, two-year-old Jérémie Audette from Orleans died after being found at the bottom of a pool at an unlicensed daycare provider.

These are just some of the horrific stories we have heard that cry out for rigorous review and oversight to protect these vulnerable children in our society.

While the Minister of Education has indicated that she plans to investigate all complaints in the past year concerning unlicensed child care providers to determine the scope of compliance with current rules, we believe that this response is wholly inadequate.

Rather, this tragic occurrence – and similar incidents in the past – merits a review by an independent body.

The review should consider:

- The adequacy of the Minister's actions in this case (i.e. whether current monitoring and enforcement procedures were followed);
- Whether current monitoring and enforcement procedures are in fact adequate to protect the safety and well-being of children in unlicensed child care settings, and
- What new policies and procedures, if any, need to be put in place to ensure the protection of children in unlicensed settings?

We must get to the bottom of what happened on July 9<sup>th</sup> and we must work together to ensure that everything possible is done to protect the lives of children in child care settings in our province.

Oversight of the well-being of children in Ontario is paramount. A child's daycare must not be a dangerous place.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and assistance.

Sincerely,

*(original signed)*

Monique Taylor

MPP Hamilton Mountain

NDP Critic for Children and Youth