

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
Coalition ontarienne pour de meilleurs service éducatifs à l'enfance



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July 12, 2013

Hon Liz Sandals
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 22nd Floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Sent by email, hard copy in the mail

Dear Minister Sandals,

We are shocked and saddened that your Ministry is investigating an illegal child care operation, reportedly with twenty-seven children located in a single house in Vaughan Ontario. The home came to light after the death of a two year old child. While we do not know the cause of death, if there were more than five children in the home, it is clear the owners of the operation acted illegally, putting the safety of many children at risk.

Ontario has an effective system of licensed home child care. Children in licensed home child care are supervised by an agency, ensuring that the home child care follows the law, is inspected and that home child care providers are supported.

However, it is not mandatory to be licensed to operate a home child care. It is inexplicable that operators can choose to be unlicensed and operate outside any regulation or supervision.

In fact, unlicensed home child care providers are allowed to look after more children (five children plus operators own children) than licensed home child care providers (5 children including operators own children).

Unfortunately, this is not the first time a child has died in unlicensed child care. In 2011, 14 month old Duy-An Nguyen died in a unlicensed child care centre. The operator faces charges of criminal negligence causing death and failing to provide the necessities of life and a trial is

pending. Media reports reported that the operator had been dropped by a licensed child care agency because the operator exceeded the number of children allowed.

In December, an Ottawa area inquest made recommendations after the 2010 death of Jérémie Audette, in an unlicensed child care home.

The jury recommendations were clear – that providers be licensed, or registered and subject to inspection.

We call on your Government to act immediately in September with new legislation that will ensure that all home child care operators are licensed through a licensed home child care agency.

Put simply, tragedies in unlicensed child care have happened too many times. Ontario families require immediate action from your Ministry to ensure that children are not put at risk through lack of oversight.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila Olan-MacLean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sheila Olan-MacLean
President, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

MPP Lisa MacLeod, PC Critic, Education
MPP Peter Tabuns, NDP Critic, Education
OCBCC Executive and Council
Jim Grieve, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education