



Children First: Eagle Ridge Nest

Thank you for taking the time to hold these talks and to listen to our thoughts and concerns regarding Child Care in Alberta. I am excited about the upcoming changes and to see how our Government will enhance Child Care in Alberta. I understand that Red Tape Reduction is important to creating efficiencies in the sector, but fear that in reducing Red Tape we will ultimately lose quality and safety components that are important to ensuring that children and families' needs are met.

The regulation review needs to recognize that high quality early learning and child care is a critical component of the education to which every child has a right, and ensure that it is not focused solely on safety, health, and structural aspects of quality, as that will be insufficient. It is also important to remember that in the first five years of their life a child's brain develops more and faster than any other time in their life. Recognizing this and incorporating quality processes into the Regulations that will support this important time in the development of the child is key. Quality child care ties directly back to a workforce educated in early childhood studies, who is fairly compensated with fair pay and benefits which will reduce the turnover of staff. The high turnover of staff is costly to programs and negatively impacts the relationships with children and families. Fair compensation and recognition of educators also leads to better working conditions where the professional feels valued and respected for the quality work that they do. Quality programming with an educated workforce who holds a minimum of an Early Childhood Education Certificate will reduce legislative requirements and monitoring of programs as the staff will have a better understanding of best practices in the sector. It is also important to ensure that those who are upholding the monitoring of programs have an educated and hands on working knowledge of child care. Staff who hold an Early Childhood Education certificate or diploma should have access to further specialized education that supports them in meeting the diverse needs of our children. Phased removal of the online Child Care Orientation Course and equivalencies that have been designated on alternate education, along with a supportive timeline and funding that will allow our current Child Care Orientation Course holders and equivalencies to complete their Early Childhood Education stream, will enhance the quality of programming that our professionals provide to our children. Quality care supports the diverse needs of Alberta's children and families and is the foundation for a strong economy and democratic society that supports re-entering the workforce, particularly for women.

Ratios should be adjusted or revised to ensure that we meet the best needs of our children and should not be tied back to ensuring that we take in as many children as possible to increase the budget and income to our centres. Children in care with higher ratios of children to staff experience less space to explore and learn in, less quality programming, and less meaningful interactions from educators. While Educators with an ECE education understand the balance between guiding children's behavior, supervision, developing appropriate curriculum, play based



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learning, and child development, struggles often occur when we have staff with an equivalency, regardless of the level of equivalency that they hold.

Ensuring that Children's Services follows through on their promise when Accreditation was abolished and embeds quality practice into the upcoming revisions to the Regulations will increase the quality of care that children in Alberta receive regardless of whether it is Out of School Care, Preschool, Family Day Homes, or Centre Based Child Care. Legislating clear and appropriate guidelines for private babysitters that ensures the quality care and safety of Alberta's children who are unable to access Regulated care is important. Increasing quality expectations across the board will support all children regardless of race, religion, socio-economic status, or family setting. This will ensure that all children across Alberta have access to programs and support that will reduce their vulnerabilities. It is also important that we recognize that incorporating outdoor play into the revisions to the Regulations, following the Get Outside and Play recommendation and increasing the outdoor space available to children while instituting a minimum daily time requirement for outdoor play, will support the needs of Alberta's children.

From a personal perspective, in our centre we have benefited from the ELCC Pilot Program and have seen first hand the impact that Play, Participation and Possibilities (Flight) has had on our children, families and educators. Our children are critical thinkers who have benefited from the education and support that their educators received. It is magical to watch our Mighty Learners and Citizens work with their educators to become co-learners and co-researchers as they move through their days. The Flight Curriculum should be made available to all qualified educators in Alberta along with Pedagogical Support that will help them reflect on and implement the curriculum in their daily program.

Added in on the second round:

SiteDocs is a platform that could be partnered with so that forms are more streamlined and easy to facilitate.

Licensing Officers should be more than just a visitor with a checklist and should also build mentorship relationships.

Post Secondary education in AB needs to get on board to support flexible delivery models across the province to ensure that our workforce has options to move forward in their education.

I would advocate for a requirement in the Regulations for ongoing meaningful professional development to be submitted and approved by C.S. - ie a College of ECE's



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It should not be as difficult to obtain approvals for our special needs children who need supports. We recently had a child that we were advocating for ICC support for a time involved in a reportable incident that could have been avoided if we had received the support sooner.

Educated Workforce
Quality
Children's Safety in Ratios