

Atkinson Centre

for Society and Child Development

Issues That Matter

Good new and bad in Bill 143

There is much depth and change in Bill 143. It repeals the *Day Nurseries Act* and amends the *Early Childhood Educators Act* and the *Education Act* in ways good and bad.

On the plus side:

The duty of school boards to ensure extended day programs has been expanded to include children in Grades 1 through 6. The Education Act now only addresses extended day in schools with full day kindergarten. The down side is it retains the silly proviso that extended day need only operate on official school days, leaving kids and families to fend on off days. A second downer is school boards are no longer required to step in if an external extended day operator folds. That responsibility is passed onto the ministry to work out alternatives with parents.

More good things:

The provincial director must consult with regional service managers before issuing new licenses and the ability to refuse a license expands beyond failure to meet minimum standards. For example the CMSM may recommend a refusal because the proposed program does not fit with the local services plan or endangers the stability of existing services. This may be one way to curtail the expansion of corporate child care.

Some bad things:

There is much in the family child care sections that is worrisome including increasing the number of children from 5 to 6 for providers associated with an agency and creating mini daycare centres where 2 providers may care for 12 children. This occurs in Quebec and is associated with some of the worse quality ratings.

The Atkinson Centre will provide a more detailed commentary on the Act in a coming listserve.