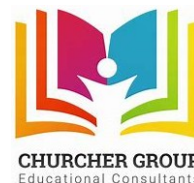


Alberta Childcare Changes

What Bill 35 would mean for your program



Proposed changes announced October 29, 2026. These changes are proposed and have not passed into law. The ministry has announced stakeholder engagement for January 2027. Implementation is expected March 1, 2027, subject to passage and proclamation (the formal step that brings a law into effect).

Bill 35, the *Education and Childcare (Securing Parental Involvement) Statutes Amendment Act, 2026*, would amend the *Early Learning and Child Care Act* for facility-based programs and family day homes. The proposals fall into three areas.

01 Operating a program



- Licensing could consider an applicant's qualifications, experience, competency, relevant enforcement history and financial circumstances at application or renewal.
- Proposed grounds for refusing to issue or renew a license include inconsistency with service area demand (the need for childcare in an area) and existing childcare capacity. This could affect new centres, expansion plans and renewals.
- Virtual inspections or monitoring could be used in limited cases when an in-person visit is not immediately possible.

02 Educator certification



- Government could set educator certification terms, expiry dates and renewal requirements. Renewal details have not been announced.

03 Safety and family communication



- When required, license holders would have to develop and implement approved safety plans, post them prominently and inform parents.
- The bill would require immediate reporting of critical incidents to the statutory director (the government official given decision-making authority under the Act) once the license holder becomes aware of them. Other incidents, and notification to directly affected families, would be required as soon as reasonably possible.
- Inspection reports and other required documents would have to be posted. Parents would have to be informed of specified postings, including safety plans and enforcement notices, and other postings when required by the statutory director.
- The statutory director could notify parents directly when considered necessary, including where a provider has failed, refused or is unable to provide information. The department could also publish incident, safety and compliance information.

For now: Continue meeting current requirements. Review your incident-response and employment policies, prepare questions about expansion or renewal, and watch for January's stakeholder engagement.

What Changes in Practice

Summary of selected changes—not a complete statement of current law.

	ALREADY IN PLACE		WHAT THE PROPOSAL ADDS
Safety plans	Ministry-approved safety plans are used after critical incidents.	→	When required, a duty to develop, implement and prominently post approved plans, and inform parents.
Family communication	Affected families are contacted, and certain notices are posted at the program and on Alberta.ca.	→	Stronger reporting, posting and parent-notification duties, alongside broader ministry notification and publication powers.
Operator assessment	Programs undergo a licensing assessment.	→	Broader screening of qualifications, experience, competency, enforcement history and financial circumstances. Demand and existing capacity could also affect whether a license is issued or renewed.
Educator certification	Educators require provincial certification.	→	Authority to set expiry dates, renewal requirements and certification terms.

Family day homes: Family day home agencies would have additional posting and notification duties, including informing parents about administrative penalties issued to relevant family day home providers or staff within the preceding five years, including penalties received while working under another agency.

THREE COMMON QUESTIONS

Q

Does this affect existing license holders?

Yes. The proposals include license renewals and ongoing program responsibilities, not only new applications.

Q

Must every allegation be shared with every family?

Notification to directly affected families is different from notification to all families. Follow applicable reporting, posting and notification requirements and licensing directions. Protect confidential investigation details.

Q

Does a safety plan mean an allegation has been proven?

No. A safety plan is a protective measure. It does not, by itself, establish that an allegation is substantiated.

WHEN AN ALLEGATION INVOLVES STAFF

One Situation, Two Responsibilities

Protect children immediately. Meet reporting duties. Get advice before making employment decisions.



ROLE ONE

As license holder

- 1 Protect children and follow reporting duties.
- 2 Follow ministry-approved safety plans.
- 3 Confirm notification directions with licensing.
- 4 Preserve records and cooperate with authorities.



ROLE TWO

As employer

- 1 Seek employment-law and HR advice.
- 2 Review contracts and workplace policies.
- 3 Get advice on leave, pay, reassignment or termination.
- 4 Document decisions and review temporary arrangements.

Protect confidential information, meet reporting duties and coordinate communication with the appropriate authorities. Obtain legal and HR advice before employment decisions; a restriction on working with children does not automatically determine employment status or pay.

PROPOSED LICENSING CHANGES

Considerations for new centres, expansion and renewal

These changes have not passed into law. Stakeholder engagement is planned for January 2027, with implementation expected March 1, 2027, subject to passage and proclamation.

Demand and existing capacity

"Add grounds to refuse to issue or renew a licence when an applicant does not meet those new requirements or when proposed service capacity is inconsistent with local demand and existing childcare capacity."

— Government childcare fact sheet

This could affect whether a license is issued or renewed, even where an operator can meet operating requirements.

Financial and operating history

The bill also identifies financial mismanagement, insolvency, receivership, unpaid statutory obligations, outstanding Crown debts and other conduct that could reasonably impair a program's viability, stability or responsible operation. For corporate applicants, this can include the history of directors, officers or controlling individuals.

Considerations for your plans

- **New centres and expansions:** Demand and existing supply could affect licensing decisions.
- **Projects underway:** Treatment of existing leases, financing and construction commitments is an important implementation question.
- **Renewals:** Existing license holders could also be affected.
- **Preparation:** Keep business plans, financial records and relevant experience and compliance information organized.

Detailed criteria and transition arrangements require clarification. January's engagement will be an opportunity to raise these questions. Existing financial commitments or funding approvals should not be treated as guarantees that a license will be issued.

Prepare Your Team Before a Concern Arises

A clear policy and a prepared team can help you respond consistently, protect confidentiality and avoid rushed decisions.

01 Develop an employment handbook policy

Have an employment lawyer or qualified HR adviser review a policy for allegations involving staff. Include:

- Who staff must notify and how concerns are escalated.
- Immediate protective steps and required reporting.
- How temporary duties, leave and pay will be considered.
- Who communicates with staff, families and the public.
- How records, confidentiality and follow-up will be managed.

Do not build in automatic dismissal or unpaid suspension simply because an allegation has been made.

02 Train staff before they need the policy

Make sure staff understand:

- How to report a concern promptly.
- What may happen if an allegation involves a colleague.
- Who is authorized to respond to parent or media questions.
- Why names, allegations and investigation details must not be discussed casually, in group chats or on social media.
- How to preserve records and follow safety-plan instructions.

Confidentiality does not prevent required reporting or lawful cooperation with authorities.

03 Plan how information will be shared

Notification and disclosure are different. Families may need to know that a concern exists and protective measures are in place without receiving confidential investigation details.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?	Distinguish directly affected families from broader notification to all families. Critical incidents are not limited to criminal allegations.
WHAT CAN BE SHARED?	Confirm the required information, recipients, timing and method with licensing. When police are involved, seek their direction about information that could affect the investigation.
WHO WILL COMMUNICATE?	Assign one authorized contact. Obtain legal advice on sensitive parent notices, staff messages and public statements.
Handle each situation case by case. Follow applicable reporting and notification duties, licensing directions and police instructions relating to the investigation. Seek urgent clarification if directions appear to conflict.	

Protect children and meet reporting obligations immediately. Get legal and HR support before making employment or sensitive communication decisions.

Childcare Connect

Licensing and incident reporting
1-844-644-5165
[Reporting guidance](#)

Employment Standards

Pay, leaves and termination
1-877-427-3731
 Edmonton: 780-427-3731
[Contact page](#)

Human Rights Commission

Discrimination and accommodation
780-427-7661
 Toll-free: dial 310-0000 first
[Contact page](#)



Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE)

Members: contact ACE to confirm the legal and HR supports included in your membership.
acenational.ca

SOURCES Government of Alberta news release, "Protecting children, keeping parents informed," October 29, 2026.
Government overview: <https://www.alberta.ca/strengthening-accountability-in-education-and-childcare-systems>
Bill 35 and legislative status: <https://www.assembly.ab.ca/assembly-business/bills/bill?billinfo=12136&from=bills>
Government childcare fact sheet: <https://www.alberta.ca/system/files/ecc-bill-35-securing-parental-involvement-childcare-fact-sheet.pdf>
Also see: [Early Learning and Child Care Act](#) · [Report an incident, concern or complaint](#) · [Alberta childcare](#)

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