

All Panelists  
Child and Youth Wellbeing Review Panel  
[CY.WellBeing@gov.ab.ca](mailto:CY.WellBeing@gov.ab.ca)

Dear Panelists,

Thank you for including Embolden Private Dayhome Community in the recent childcare provider round table regarding the wellbeing of Children and Youth in Alberta - post pandemic. We appreciated the opportunity to share the experiences of private dayhome providers across the province and to hear from other childcare providers as well.

There has certainly been a wide range of impact across the childcare sector due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As was heard at the roundtable, the experience of Alberta daycare providers, preschool providers, and dayhome providers were similar in some regards but also quite different in others.

As Alberta's recognized private dayhome support network, we wanted to formally provide some perspectives as shared to us by the private dayhome community in Alberta.

Throughout the pandemic, the private dayhome community was instructed by Alberta Health Services to follow the guidance for approved family dayhomes. In response, the majority of the community adopted stricter sickness policies, daily COVID-19 symptom checklists, and enhanced sanitization protocols. However, as many providers have shared with us, it was otherwise business as usual throughout the private dayhome community.

When Embolden PDC polled the private dayhome community, the majority of respondents reported that the pandemic *did not* negatively impact their dayhome children. In fact, providers shared with us that many dayhome parents felt that their dayhome provided a sense of normalcy in a world that was anything but normal for so many months. And providers have even gone so far as to say that their dayhome children thrived this year despite the pandemic.

While there are certainly small pockets of children who *did* experience negative outcomes due to the pandemic, the private dayhome community is not reporting significant negative impacts on children's health and well-being. While play themes have absolutely become more COVID-19 centric and children have become accustomed to social distancing and wearing masks at school and in public, children were also able to continue socializing and interacting with peers and were able to maintain secure attachments with caregivers while at dayhome.

Embolden PDC believes that small group sizes, intentional provider/parent relationships, and the flexibility to do what was best for individual children and families, sheltered Alberta dayhome children from some of the negative impacts of living through the pandemic.

However, more in line with the childcare sector as a whole, the negative impacts experienced within the private dayhome community are being more widely reported by providers themselves.

Isolation and burnout are already common within the dayhome community and the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the prevalence of both. Provider and parent anxiety is also being reported at increased rates this year. Common triggers have been related to job security, economic uncertainty, fear of contracting COVID-19, and fear of negative outcomes in children, among others. Although unintentional, these anxieties can be passed along to children and can have a negative impact on their health and well-being.

It is for this reason that Embolden PDC is calling on the Alberta Government to recognize the contributions of the private dayhome sector throughout the pandemic so that providers can feel supported and seen.

While it may seem like an insignificant gesture, recognition at a provincial level can and will make a difference to the private dayhome community.

Private dayhome operators are providing lawful childcare within the province of Alberta and deserve to have the support and acknowledgement that is needed to help ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children they care for.

At the root of it all, providers cannot pour from an empty cup, and any support and acknowledgment shown to the private dayhome community will trickle down to the 6 in 7 families who utilize unlicensed care in the province.

We also ask that Children's Services continue to prioritize the need for support across the entire childcare sector - including in unlicensed care. The impacts of the pandemic will surely be felt for many years to come and providers will need resources and support to help them recover well so they can continue to provide quality childcare in Alberta.

We again thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts and perspectives in a meaningful way - and acknowledge the effort made by Children's Services to include the voice of the private dayhome community.

Should you wish to discuss unlicensed childcare and the impacts of the pandemic on children in unlicensed care, please reach out to us at any time.

With gratitude,  
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