

Reported high-risk, potentially criminal incidents in licensed childcare

What you can expect and key privacy considerations

What is a high-risk, potentially criminal incident?

A high-risk, potentially criminal incident is a serious situation that may affect children's safety or well-being, such as an allegation of abuse or neglect, or a suspected criminal offence.

What happens when a report is made



A concern is reported

A concern may be raised by a child, parent, concerned citizen, childcare program, the local police authority, or identified by licensing staff.



Immediate follow-up

Education and Childcare reviews the information right away and begins responding to the concern.



Safety measures are put in place

Licensing staff will:

- Visit the program within one business day where possible
- Review records and information
- Require a Safety Plan to protect children while the situation is assessed

The program will contact parents of children who may have been impacted.



Ongoing oversight

Education and Childcare provides oversight under the *Early Learning and Child Care Act*, while local police investigate criminal allegations under the authority of the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

What parents can expect during a police investigation

Childcare Licensing will pause its own inspection during a police investigation. Police investigations follow a structured process that includes gathering information and evidence, reviewing documentation, and, where necessary, working with other authorities like Alberta Health Services or Child Intervention Services. This work must be completed before charges are laid.

What parents may be told

Parents may be told that:

- a concern has been received
- safety measures are in place
- a Safety Plan is available for review
- an investigation is underway

Information is shared carefully and police may direct that information not be shared with anyone not directly impacted.

Why some details must stay private

At all times, including while an investigation is underway, there are limits on what information can be shared. This is to protect the privacy of children, families, and staff involved, and to ensure the investigation is fair, thorough, and not compromised.

Even when allegations are serious, the law requires that we protect:

- Children's privacy and well-being
- The fairness of police investigations
- The legal rights of the person accused

Sharing names or details too early can:

- Harm children
- Interfere with evidence or witness statements
- Compromise a fair legal process

While licensing staff may not be able to share details immediately, please be assured that licensing takes all complaints very seriously and will share appropriate information as soon as it is reasonable to do so.