



## Family Child Care Homes in Virginia

- ✘ VA does not license child care homes until 5 unrelated children are in care.
- ✘ Most child care homes with 1-4 children are not licensed, which means no background check, no minimum health & safety training, and no inspections. (Local ordinances in Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax County license or permit small providers).
- ✘ No requirements for gun safety, safe sleeping practices, fire extinguishers, working smoking detectors, evacuation plans or lists of children in care.

### VA Fast Facts

- 387,037 children under age 6 have working parents
- 496,000 children between age 6 & 12 have working parents
- There is no child care safety law with regard to gun access by young children.

<http://va.childcareaware.org/>

## Cole

Cole was a quiet, loving, polite boy who at 4 years-old, was cautious and protective of his younger sisters. When his parents, Kyrin and Josh Falcetti, needed child care, they did what most parents do. They asked friends and family for recommendations. A friend recommended his fiancé as great with kids. Kyrin and Josh felt their children would be safe because the child care provider was recommended through a friend.



4-year-old Cole Clark died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound in an unlicensed child care home in May 2017.

On May 15, 2017, Cole was dropped off at his child care provider at 11:30am. (His sister was with grandma that day, otherwise, she would have been in the home as well). At 12:45, the parents were called with the news that the unthinkable had happened. Cole had shot himself with a loaded handgun that was left in the master bedroom of their child care provider. The provider knew guns were in the home (her fiancé was a Stafford County Sheriff's recruit going through training). Part of that training is about firearm safety- never leave a loaded gun in (or on) a bedside table. The provider had a spare room set up with a bed and crib for the children she was caring for to take naps. Alternative sleeping arrangements were discussed with the parents and the master bedroom was never an option. For unknown reasons, the provider chose to place Cole in her personal master bedroom (where a weapon was) for his nap. It's unclear whether Cole was placed in the master bedroom on a regular basis or whether the loaded weapon was on the nightstand table or in a drawer, but what is known is that it was loaded and within reach of a young child.

*"We have so many questions about how this could happen," says Kyrin. "We may never know the true details of that day. What we can do, on behalf of Cole, is to work to ensure that no family has to go through the tragedy that we have faced."*

### Child Care Aware of Virginia's Policy Recommendations:

- Require all paid child care providers caring for unrelated children to have a license.
- Require anyone operating a child care business to store weapons unloaded, locked, with ammunition stored separately out of reach of children.
- Ensure felony penalties apply to anyone operating a child care business who leaves loaded guns within reach of children.
- Support legislation that promotes the safety of children in child care.

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