



Child Care Safety in Virginia:

- ✘ 14 categories of “license-exempt” child care under VA statute
- ✘ No background checks, minimum training, or monitoring is required of license-exempt care
- ✘ The child abuse registry is not accessible to parents who are looking for child care.

VA Fast Facts

- 402,000 children under age 6 have working parents
- 496,000 children between age 6 & 12 have working parents
- In December of 2016, a report required by the General Assembly made recommendations to promote child safety in license-exempt care – minimum protections for children.

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

Kennedy

Patience and Kevin Barkman weren't happy with the home-based child care program that their daughter, Kennedy was in. They had some concerns and began looking for another provider. They found a center, located near Patience's work, and thought that the center would be safer and that the people would have better training. The Center, Little People's Academy, located in a strip mall on Brook Road in Henrico, seemed like a great opportunity for Kennedy to be cared for close to Patience's work and with caring, experienced staff. But, all was not what it appeared to be.

In the fall of 2016 when Patience and Kennedy returned home from what Patience thought was a normal day, it became all too clear that the day was anything but normal. Kennedy had bruising from the top of her hip down her thigh. The Barkmans brought her to the hospital and were advised to call Child Protective Services. An investigation by Henrico Police, the Virginia Department of Social Services, and Child Protective Services resulted in three women employed by Little People's Academy being charged with operating without a license, making false statements, and child abuse. More than 20 children from 6 weeks to 4 years-old were in the care of this unlicensed program – far exceeding VA's licensing threshold. The Barkmans are committed to fighting for the safety of children in child care. *“No one should have to suffer the way our family has as a result of an abusive provider,”* the family testified before the General Assembly.



Kennedy Barkman, abused in Henrico child care program



Bruising of Kennedy Barkman

Child Care Aware of Virginia's Policy Recommendations:

- Require minimum health and safety training annually for all licensed, regulated, and registered child care providers as appropriate for the ages of the children in care.
- Adopt the recommendations from the license-exempt task force to promote child safety in license-exempt care (e.g., require registration for license-exempt providers, background checks for staff, CPR certification for at least one adult on site or with the children, and safe practices for babies).
- Require public access to the child abuse registry to ensure that no providers with a history of child abuse may care for children.

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