



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

Senators Jeff Klein and Diane Savino Detail Hidden Dangers at NYC Day Care Centers in New Investigative Report: Even When DOH Violations Pile-up, Many Centers Do Nothing, Putting Children at Risk

JEFFREY D. KLEIN May 16, 2013

| ISSUE: **FAMILIES, CHILDREN**



NEW YORK - Today, New York State Senate Co-Leader Jeff Klein (D-Bronx) and Senator Diane Savino (D-Staten Island) announced findings of a citywide investigation into the safety of New York City day care centers. The report found that not only are an alarming number of day care centers repeatedly cited by the NYC Department of Health for “serious” and “critical” health code violations, but due to a lack of accountability, few of these centers take meaningful corrective action. Instead, many centers simply allow violations to roll over from year to year—without any meaningful repercussions. In fact, since 2008, not a single New York City day care center has had their operating license suspended or revoked.

Senator Jeff Klein said, “When New York City parents read these findings, they’ll have every right to be outraged. Everyday, hardworking parents trust these daycares to look after their children. But after today, we need to ask ourselves, who is looking after the day care centers? Since city agencies are not holding these day care centers accountable, we need to give parents the ability to easily identify the worst offenders. That’s why we’re introducing legislation that will require every daycare to post their most recent inspection report on-site and online. We know that will serve as a tremendous wake-up call to the industry.”

Some of the most common violations include (1) persistent failure to screen new hires for a history of child abuse, criminal convictions, or sex offender status, (2) deterioration of facility infrastructure, (3) failure to properly clean facilities, (4) failure certify all staff members as physically and mentally healthy, and (5) failure to install and maintain window guards in rooms, hallways, and stairwells.

According to the report, New York City’s Department of Health has recorded over 11,000 health code violations in Brooklyn’s 809 registered day care centers since 2010. Over the past two and a half years, Brooklyn’s day care centers averaged 14.5 violations per facility. Facilities in the Bronx, Staten Island, and Manhattan are not far behind, averaging 13, 12, and 11 violations, respectively.

Violations for Group Day Care by Borough

<u>Borough</u>	<u># of Providers</u>	<u># of Violations Since 2010</u>	<u>Avg. # of Violations Per Provider Since 2010</u>
<i>Bronx</i>	295	3,854	13.06

<i>Staten Island</i>	112	1,388	12.39
<i>Brooklyn</i>	809	11,743	14.49
<i>Manhattan</i>	482	5,575	11.57
<i>Queens</i>	465	3,287	7.07

Senator Diane Savino said, “As someone who started her career as a child advocate, I know how tough it can be for parents to find a reliable daycare provider. We want every parent to have access to high quality day care. But in order to do that, we can’t allow repeat offenders to get away without so much as a slap on the wrist. Posting the latest inspection report at the entrance of every day care center will get these operators to clean-up their act—after all, advertising a laundry list of threats to children’s safety isn’t a great way of attracting new families.”

Hidden Camera Footage

At the press conference, hidden camera footage shot by Sen. Klein’s staff at NYC day care centers illustrated clear lapses in security. At one day care center in Queens, an undercover member of Senator Klein’s staff posing as a prospective parent toured most of the facility without being noticed. During the undercover staffer’s tour, video footage revealed an exit door wide open and two security desks unattended.

At another day care center in the Bronx, when the prospective parent asked if the facility had any outstanding health violations, the center’s tour guide answered “no”—even though the day care has some of the most DOH violations in the borough. At a day care center in Staten Island, a closet full of toxic cleaning supplies was left open and unattended only a few feet away from nearby children.

Legislation

Senators Klein and Savino introduced legislation today that will require day care centers to post their most recent Department of Health inspection report on-site, at the entrance of the facility, and online. By making these inspections readily accessible to prospective families, Senators Klein and Savino believe that parents can make a more informed decision about where to enroll their child. Senators Klein and Savino also believe that posting inspection results will spur day care operators into action and put an end to persistent violations.

