

Kindertown day care wins round 1 in court; stays open

By Kathryn Reed

Kindertown day care in South Lake Tahoe will remain open for at least 120 days based on a judge's ruling Thursday afternoon.

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge James Dawson had little to say before issuing his decision to grant the stay. He asked Brenda Ray, deputy attorney general representing the Department of Social Services, if any child at Kindertown had been put in harms way since August when a child left the center on his own and was found wandering on Highway 50, a couple blocks from the day care. Ray did not know of any incidents.

It is the August incident that led the state to initiate proceedings to close the three-decade-old facility. This is the second time in 16 months the state has tried to close the center.

Ray said the state is appealing last fall's decision that allowed Kindertown to keep its doors open.



Attorney Mike
McLaughlin and
Kindertown
owner Maria

Barrows-Crist
outside the
courthouse on
Feb. 3.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Kindertown owner Maria Barrows-Crist prevailed the first time with the help of attorney Mike McLaughlin of Feldman-Shaw-McLaughlin LLP.

When asked outside the courthouse Feb. 3 if he believed there would be a different outcome at the end of all of this, McLaughlin told *Lake Tahoe News*, "no."

"It's a continuing pattern of abuse by the state," McLaughlin said.

He said much of the same during the brief court hearing, which was attended by about 30 supporters of Kindertown.

The state had asked Judge Steve Bailey to be removed from the case, which was granted. Bailey is the one who ruled in Kindertown's favor last year.

Further hearings regarding Kindertown will be before Judge Warren Stracener in Placerville.

Although officials with the state Department of Education were at Kindertown this week letting parents know where else they could enroll their children, Barrows-Crist said no child has left the center because of the latest turmoil.