

Kindertown remains open per judge's order

By Kathryn Reed

Kindertown Day Care and Preschool was granted a reprieve this morning, allowing it to remain open for at least a month.

The South Lake Tahoe center for youngsters has been in a fight with the Department of Social Services for nearly two years.



This may not have been the last graduating class at Kindertown.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Warren Stracener changed his mind June 22. Six days ago he said the center must close June 24. Today he said owner Maria Barrows-Crist will have her day in court July 22 in Placerville.

"I'm not only thrilled for myself, but I'm thrilled for my families," Barrows-Crist told *Lake Tahoe News* after the hearing.

Mike McLaughlin, who represented Barrows-Crist in court, said

the judge reversed his stance from a week ago based on information he received in the last week. He wants both sides to present more information to him in the next month.

None of the families who have children at Kindertown had taken their kids out after being told last week about the threat of closure by Barrows-Crist. State licensing officials were also calling families starting June 17.

The center will be small and private again starting July 1 because the state has eliminated its funding. This leaves about 50 children at the center, though there is room for more.

With the loss of the children who were receiving the state subsidy, it means Kindertown needs fewer employees. A total of eight workers will have left because of this forced decline in enrollment.