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## Lead paint found at Belmont Mill

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BELMONT - Parents of children enrolled at the Belmont Early Learning Center, which is located on the first floor of the Belmont Mill, have been informed that lead paint has been found in the floors above.

Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin explained that the lead was found in paint chips between the fourth floor and third floor ceiling. However, despite the discovery, Beaudin said that currently there is no cause for alarm for parents or children "because we believe that the lead paint was encapsulated appropriately."

To ensure that is the case, Beaudin said the town has hired the Scott Lawson Group, a company that specializes in environmental testing, to test the rest of the building to ensure that it is safe.

Beaudin said the contract hiring them was signed last Monday for roughly \$2,200, but that she is unsure if they have begun the process of checking the rest of the mill or not.

Beaudin said no businesses would be closed while the inspection is being performed.

"We do not believe there is any need for concern. We just want to make sure everything meets the required standards," Beaudin said.

Marti Ilg, executive director of Lakes Region Child Care Services, which runs the Belmont Early Learning Center, said there is a backup plan in case the center has to be closed due to the results of the inspection.

"We are able to have the children from the Belmont Center come over to the Laconia Early Learning Center. We have permission from licensing to do that, so children and parents, they can just come over here. We want to be available for parents. We know they have to go to work, and consistency is important for children," Ilg said.

However, Ilg said that is not expected to be the case.

"We don't think there is a problem. However, if the town does determine remediation is needed we hope they will act in good faith and let us know so we can let parents know," said Ilg.

The lead paint was initially discovered in late December, when town officials, while beginning the process of changing the carpet on the fourth floor, discovered structural problems. The costs of fixing the structural problems have been estimated at a million dollars.