

**Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
Coalition ontarienne pour de meilleurs service éducatifs à l'enfance**



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Hon. Laurel Broten
Minister of Education
Mowat Block, 22nd Floor
900 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2

Sent by email, hard copy in the mail

Dear Minister Broten,

Last February we wrote to you on the issue of CMSM and DSSAB subsidy eligibility policies discriminating against graduate and post-graduate students.

We wrote to you about Reem Attieh, a York PhD student who was denied a child care subsidy from the Region of Peel. Her case manager gave a number of reasons: she could not produce a full-time class schedule, she was workforce ready, etc. Without a written policy, the case manager said that PhD students were not eligible for child care subsidy. After significant pressure from Reem Attieh, our organization and her student union, she was approved for a child care subsidy.

Unfortunately, she is not the only graduate student in Peel who faces problems accessing child care subsidy. Last summer, the Peel Region Early Learning and Child Care Task Force held a public meeting and one of the deputations came from a parent denied a child care subsidy as a result of her studies.

Our letter last February argued that policies denying access to child care subsidy for graduate and post-graduate students discriminate against women students. Furthermore, they send an awful message to female students that they should not aspire to earn an advanced degree.

Unfortunately, the issue of the ability of graduate students to access child care subsidies is not unique to the Peel region and it has not gone away.

The City of Ottawa has released a policy that says parents are only eligible for a child care subsidy during a 4 year undergraduate degree.

While the OCBC has worked in the past to advocate that part-time students be eligible for a child care subsidy, these affected parents are full-time students who meet the provincial income test.

When we first heard about women graduate students being denied child care subsidies, it sounded like a bad joke. Women should be encouraged to pursue higher education, not provided with further barriers. These are full-time students at accredited post-secondary institutions and they qualify for a child care subsidy.

Therefore, we urge the Ministry of Education to investigate this policy. We would appreciate if you could provide us with the legislative basis by which municipalities have the ability to deem a class of people (in this case graduate and post-graduate students) ineligible for child care subsidy despite their eligibility as a result of Ontario's income test and their enrollment in full-time studies.

Sincerely,



Sheila Olan-MacLean
President, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

CC:

Hon. John Milloy
Minister of College, Training and Universities

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