

Child Care

ONTARIO CAN'T WORK WITHOUT IT



Ontario's Early Learning Program: Impacts on Child Care

The early learning and child care community supported the vision laid out in "With Our Best Future in Mind". But we knew we would be impacted by the many changes to our sector. 4 and 5 year olds who are currently in child care would move to programs in the schools, and child care would need to transition to specializing in caring for younger children. The report had two recommendations to keep child care viable.

- **Full-day Learning for 4 and 5's – the Extended Day**

The report recommended that school boards run affordable after school programs for all children from 4 to 12 years old, which would have supported good jobs for early childhood educators in the schools and seamless quality programming for children.

- **Best Start Child and Family Centres**

Child and Family Centres were to bring together a range of services for children from infants to 4 years olds. When a school board implemented the full-day learning program and 4 and 5 years olds moved in to the schools, child care services would be stabilized by joining together with other children's programs. While Child and Family Centres are being studied by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Government has failed to move forward on this recommendation that would have helped child care centres cope with the changes brought by full-day learning.

Unfortunately, with full-day learning in the schools well underway, neither of those recommendations is in place, and many child care centres will be in a desperate financial situation.

Without government funding and an investment in our programs, child care fees will go up and centres will close.

For more information go to www.childcareontario.org or contact us at info@childcareontario.org

In December 2010, Dalton McGuinty announced the Government would amend the recently passed the Full Day Learning Statute to allow school boards to contract out after-school programs to child care programs.

The move away from the school boards delivering “extended day” programming is a move away from a publicly operated and universal system. In licensed child care, as a result of underfunding, we only have enough spaces to serve 20% of children.

In addition, the move toward third party operators will not make our child care system more stable. To ensure high quality early learning in schools, we need to:

- Ensure after-school programs be run by non-profit child care operators with rent-free space.
- Ensure collaboration between schools and child care centres to ensure the third party arrangements are as seamless as is possible.
- Ensure that child care programs running after-school programs offer comparable salaries and benefits with ECE’s working in the full-day learning program.
- Increase space for early learning and child care programs in our schools to expand access.

To Stabilize our Child Care Programs We Need Base Funding

We call on the Provincial Government to invest \$100 million this year and to work with the early learning and child care community to develop a new funding model for child care that stabilizes our existing programs, helps support the cost to parents and helps raise the wages of early childhood educators and other child care staff.

Child care and early learning in Ontario have been chronically underfunded for over 15 years, and impacts of the new early learning program will only made the situation worse.

Without funding in the 2011 Provincial budget, we will see child care fees rise anywhere from 15 to 30 %

Lack of financial stability for programs could means some child care programs are not viable and close, and with spaces for only 20% of Ontario’s children we cannot afford to lose a single space.

For many years, child care has relied on higher and higher parent fees to keep our doors open. Parent fees are as high as they can go. Ontario’s government must invest in the child care sector.

What can we do?

- Participate in the “**Week of Action for Child Care**” February 14th – 18th 2011
- Check out our suggestions for involvement (some that take less than 5 minutes) on “**What can I do if I only have...**” Go to the OCBC website.
- Attend an event in a community near you.

Our Communities Need Child Care: We can’t afford to lose it!

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