

Child Care

ONTARIO CAN'T WORK WITHOUT IT



Our Communities Need Child Care: We Can't Afford to Lose it

- Because of underfunding, and impacts from the Ontario's full-day kindergarten program, parents can expect to see child care fees increase from 15 to 30 percent. Some programs may have to close.
- In Ontario, 4 out of 5 children do not have access to a licensed child care space. Without base funding to child care like in Manitoba and Quebec that reduce the fees to affordable levels, many Ontario parents are paying between \$40 and \$60 a day for each child.
- There is a shortage of qualified early childhood educators. Providing high quality care requires maintaining good ratios of staff to children. Despite high parent fees, many child care staff are underpaid. Funding to support wages and benefits is essential to maintaining a high quality early learning and child care program.

I am a busy parent? How can I make the biggest difference?

Politicians listen to parents. The most valuable thing you can do is to let your Federal and Provincial representatives know that you support increased child care funding.

The news media is another way of getting the attention of politicians and your neighbours. Write a letter to the editor. Work with your child care centre to spread the word and put child care on the public agenda.

It's never too early to think about the Ontario election on October 6, 2011. Politicians need to hear that you will vote for child care, and you want to see child care funding in the party platforms in the fall.

Go to www.childcareontario.org for our fact sheet on actions: **What can I do if I only have...? 5 minutes, 10 minutes and 30 minutes.**

See over for information on the issues in early learning and child care

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

Lack of funding for early learning and child care programs

There has not been an adjustment in funding for inflation to municipalities in over 15 years. That means every year we have less money to fund vital programs and qualified staff.

Because of the lack of provincial funding, licensed child care is very expensive. The cost of child care is now more than most families can pay – fees cannot continue to rise.

Lack of subsidies mean many low income families cannot access high quality child care. We need a new funding model that does not rely on ever-increasing parent fees.

We called on the Provincial Government to invest \$100 million in the 2011 Provincial Budget to work with the early learning and child care community to develop a new funding model for child care that makes child care affordable for parents and raises the wages of early childhood educators and other child care staff. There was no funding in the Budget, which means it is even more important to ensure early learning and child care programs are on the agenda for this fall's Provincial Election.

Impacts of Ontario's Early Learning Program on Child Care

Ontario has a new early learning program with 4 and 5 year olds in school programs. Because younger children require more staff to care for, without new funding, parent fees *will* go up. If parents can't afford child care, those centres may no longer be viable and may have to close. In Ontario, we cannot afford to lose a single child care space.

Shortage of Qualified Staff: Who Will Take Care of Our Children?

Quality in child care is our staff - the early childhood educators and other staff who provide care and education to children.

A high quality early learning and child care program will spend 80% of its budget on staff. Early childhood educators have at minimum a two year college diploma and several universities now offer degree programs in Early Childhood Education and are graduating hundreds of students every year.

But we have two problems – we do not have enough early childhood educators and we lose many great early childhood educators when they leave the job they love to earn more and help support their own families. Statistics from 2006 tell us that 41% of trained early childhood educators are working in other fields.

There is a shortage of qualified ECE's in Ontario and this shortage is going to become more acute with the increased demand in full-day kindergarten. Many registered early childhood educators (RECE's) are underpaid and undervalued. Fair pay and benefits (like pensions) will ensure that RECE's are able to make enough money to support their own families and encourage RECE's who have left the field to come back to the job that they love and were trained to do.

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