

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care Annual Report 2008 – 2009



Who We Are

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) was founded in 1981 to advocate for universally accessible, quality, non-profit regulated child care in the province of Ontario.

Our membership includes representatives of more than 500 organizations and individuals from education, labour, child-welfare, rural communities, First Nations, Francophone, social policy, anti-poverty, professional, student and women's organizations.

The Coalition is a public awareness organization and a non-partisan advocacy group. We work to bring the benefits of early learning and care to the attention of the public and policy makers. The work of the OCBCC covers a wide range of activities, including:

- ❑ Monitoring provincial child care policy and legislation
- ❑ Lobbying for changes and improvements
- ❑ Developing policy alternatives for government consideration to improve the quality, accessibility and management of child care services
- ❑ Developing books, manuals, fact sheets and news bulletins on child care policy and operations for use by child care programs, early childhood education training programs, parents and the general public
- ❑ Conducting public information campaigns through written material, videos, public service announcements, public speaking and working with the media
- ❑ Conducting and commissioning research
- ❑ Providing a variety of services to assist community based child care programs
- ❑ Participating in an array of advisory committees, task forces, community planning bodies and child care development associations

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NOTE: This annual report covers the period
of April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009

Letter from the President

2008-2009 has again been another busy year for the OCBCC. The field of Early Learning and Child Care is poised on the edge of many changes as ECE's are registering with the College of Early Childhood Education and we anticipate the report from Dr. Charles Pascal as Special Advisor on Full Day Learning. As we stated in submission to the Early Learning Advisor, the OCBCC is hopeful that the changes will build a real system with public funding support to the early learning services provided to Ontario's children and families.

Again this year as last, we work harder with fewer resources to do the very necessary work of the Coalition. The Council and Executive have taken decisions that in the end have increased their volunteer time and efforts to keep the Coalition focused on the many campaigns we have either initiated or participated in with our partners across the province and at the federal level. The annual report outlines in detail the many activities, campaigns and media work that have occurred over the last year.

At this very moment, Ontario families sit on a precipice waiting for child care services while funding for these services to the province from the federal government is coming to a halt. Early learning opportunities for many thousands of children on waiting lists hang in the balance. Our current campaign, www.waitingforchildcare.ca, has helped us to identify new advocates and flesh out the regional problems that exist in a non system of early learning and care. We cannot afford to lose one space that provides children with learning opportunities or families the support they need to work or go to school. And so, the work continues.

In this past year that may be characterized as one of change and anticipation we would like to thank our staff, Sue Parker, Jenny Robinson, and Andrea Calver for the dedication and flexibility they have shown toward focusing our work and keeping advocates across the province informed and motivated with each campaign.

Co-presidents,

Cheryl DeGras

Tracy Saarikoski

The OCBCC Team

Council Members 2008-2009

Executive Members

Cheryl DeGras – Co-President, U of T Early Learning Centre
Tracy Saarikoski – Co-President, Teddy Bear Daycare, Sudbury
Carrol Anne Sceviour, OCBCC Vice-President
- Ontario Federation of Labour
Pam Kent – Treasurer, LARC, Napanee

Shellie Bird, Past-President
– Ottawa Federation of Parents' Daycares
Lynn Carlson-Dryden Children's Resource Ctr.
Karen Clark – Canadian Auto Workers
Karen Cole, Southeast Network Rep
Cheryl DeGras – Co-President
Diane Dobusz – Pat Schultz Child Care Centre,
Catharine Fife – Southwest Region
Victoria Hunt – OECTA
Kathy Johnson – CUPE Ontario
Megan Park – OPSEU
Sandra Robinson, Southeast
Tracy Saarikoski – Teddy Bear Daycare, Co
Janet Teibo – CUPE 2484

Staff

Jenny Robinson, Executive Director (left mid-year)
Andrea Calver, Coordinator
Sue Parker, Office and Membership Services Administrator, (left mid-year)

The OCBCC is pleased to host students from the Early Childhood Education programs at George Brown College and Ryerson University.

The OCBCC gratefully acknowledges the support of the following funding partners in 2008/2009: Better Child Care Education, the Trillium Foundation, and the following donors: Canadian Auto Workers, CUPE Local 2484 Toronto Day Care Workers, Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario Division, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, National Union of Public and General Employees, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Ontario Federation of Labour, Ontario Public Service Employees Union, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, United Steelworkers, Canadian Federation of Students' Ontario Office, Network Child Care Services, Red Apple Day Care, Rachel Langford and Ryerson's Early Childhood Education Program, George Brown College, Canadian Federation of Students, Ryerson Students' Union, Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson

Council Members

Barbara Buffett – General Member, Dryden
Tyler Campbell - Northeast
Simone Castellino – General Rep
Lucille Desjardins – Treasure Island
Daycare, Orillia
Martha Friendly – Childcare Resource and
Research Unit, Toronto
Gilary Massa – Canadian Federation of
Students
Rachel Langford, Special Constituency Rep
Cindy Magloughlin – Dalhousie Parents'
Day Care Centre, Ottawa
Vivian McCaffrey – ETFO
Jane Mercer – TCBC
Anabela Medeiros, Southeast
Debbie Milne, Southeast
Sandra Sahli – OSSTF (Marg McPhail is
OSSTF meeting rep.)
Eduarda Sousa – AECEO
Patti Strople, General Rep

Press Releases

Province Funds Additional Child Care Subsidies: Majority of Children on Waiting Lists Will Still Wait for Affordable Child Care, July 9, 2008 - Hamilton

Federal Election: Child Care Key to Canada's Economic Future, September 10, 2008

Groundbreaking web-site for Parents www.waitingforchildcare.ca launched September 22, 2008

Response to Harper Announcement on UCCB, Monday, October 6, 2008 - Ottawa

Pauline Marois, leader of the PQ Honoured as a Champion for Child Care, October 23, 2008

Ontario's Poverty Reduction Plan Needs More Action on Child Care, December 4, 2008 - Toronto

2009 Federal Budget –Children and Families Left Behind, January 27, 2009

Minister Finley's Fiction will not save Child Care, February 5, 2009

Press Release - Early Learning and Child Care: Ontario Can't Work Without It!, March 5, 2009

Press Release - "We Won't Go Backwards" March 23, 2009

Issued after we dropped off thousands of petitions to the Ministry of Finance on March 23

No new funding for child care could see the dismantling of child care programs March 26, 2009

OCBCC Activities

June 2nd lobby



Present at the meeting were representatives of the 3 major political parties. 60 participants from across Ontario were greeted by our Irene Harris of the OFL and Tracy Saarikowski of the OCBCC. During their opening addresses, Tracy was quick to point out that affordable child care was something we should all be fighting for, but that most people feel that lobbying for change is something that “other people” should do. Irene lamented that the lack of reliable, affordable child care is crippling to both families and the community.

We asked only 3, pre-disclosed questions of the political representatives:

- 1) Is your government/ party prepared to provide adequate capital and operational funding to build new public, not-profit early learning and child care centers?
- 2) What steps will your government take to address the need for universal access to affordable quality child care for all children?
- 3) Because of low wages many ECE’s turn to other occupations. What does your government plan to do to increase wages and compensation in the sector.

Canadian Labour Congress Women’s Economic Equality Campaign

The Canadian Labour Congress created report cards to measure the performance of the federal and provincial governments on investment in early learning and child care. Based on public data provided by or through governments, the report cards measure progress in three areas:

1. Affordability, measured by what it costs parents to access child care services;
2. Quality, measured by the salaries paid to child care staff;
3. Accessibility, measured by the creation of new public child care spaces.

In the CLC Report cards, the Ontario Government Got a Failing Grade on early learning and Child Care

The vast majority of today’s Canadian moms are working mothers. More than 65% of women with children under three years old work outside the home. Meanwhile, 75% of women with pre-school kids (between three and five years old) are in the paid workforce.

The Federal government was also criticized for a lack of investment in the early learning and child care sector. Despite this clear demand for services only 16% of children in Canada had access to a regulated child care space in 2004. Since the Conservatives, led by Stephen Harper, took power in 2006, things haven't improved.

On Saturday, June 14, 2008 we helped organize a rally for a national child care system at Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's Whitby-Oshawa riding office.

Kingston Caravan for Child Care



Child care advocates held a "Caravan for Child Care" to protest the closure of the St. Lawrence College child care centre.

The St. Lawrence Early Childhood Centre is the largest of three community college programs to close this year. Child care is funded through the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Community Colleges are funded through the Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities. Neither Ministry has tried to find a solution

to keep the child care programs operating.

Only 12% of Ontario children have access to a licensed child care space. At \$40 a day, the cost of child care for one child exceeds \$10,000 per year. Despite the need throughout the Province, the McGuinty government failed to meet a commitment to investing \$300 million dollars in their first term – instead allocating an increase of \$50 million dollars over the past two years.



www.waitingforchildcare.ca

Parents with young children have incredibly busy lives and securing affordable quality child care is one of their biggest frustrations. This groundbreaking website gives parents a quick and easy way to send a message to Queen's Park and Parliament Hill. The website www.waitingforchildcare.ca invites parent who can't find and/or afford child care to send a strong message to their provincial and federal representatives that child care needs public investment.

Licensed child care costs can easily exceed \$10,000 per year. Many families need help paying for child care. Thousands of children are on municipal waiting list for a child care subsidy in

Ontario. Even with a subsidy, or for parents who are able to pay for child care, many centres have their own waiting list for a child care space.

Some provincial politicians still say child care is not an issue in their riding. In reality, parents are exhausted by work and trying to meet their child care needs. www.waitingforchildcare.ca is a way for parents to make their voice heard at Queen's Park.

Our Provincial Tour of front-line supervisor meetings took us to:

Sudbury, November 18; Chatham, November 25; Windsor, November 26; Peterborough, January 14; Kitchener-Waterloo, February 12; Guelph, February 13; Simcoe, February 18; Peel, March 9; Halton, March 19; Napanee, April 16; St. Catharine's April 20

We also attended seven Toronto area network meetings.

www.waitingforchildcare.ca has provided extraordinary opportunities for networking with new coalition partners. We have also done early learning and child care meetings with:

Rexdale Women's Centre; South Asian Women's Rights Organization; Ontario Bangladeshi Cultural Society; Punjabi Community Health Services; United Muslim Women of Canada

Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day



On October 22, 2009, we successfully celebrated the 8th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, along with over 20,000 child care workers and our eight union partners. Over 150 municipalities issued proclamations in support and more than 400 child care centres and other organizations used the materials and celebrated their employees at events large and small around the province.

Pauline Marois, leader of the PQ was honoured by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care for her decade of commitment to child care. Madame Marois received the inaugural award for 'Excellence in Advocacy' at Ryerson University.

Marois passionately stated that, "developing universal child care, was a major step forward for Quebec society as a whole, for parents as well as for children".

She said that as a result of her government's commitment, "the population of Quebec has come to see day care facilities on an equal footing with issues such as health, education, road infrastructure and the environment- indispensable."

She commented that at the time of implementation the "Quebec provincial government was dealing with political, financial and administrative problems, introducing child care was no small task, but we are now equipped with a universal network across Québec, for that I am extremely proud. "

Madame Marois was in Toronto to receive the inaugural 'Excellence in Advocacy' Award from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. The evening marked the eighth annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. The day recognizes the incredible contribution and commitment of hard working but undervalued child care staff.

- National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE)
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
- Canadian Auto Workers (CAW)
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU)
- United Steelworkers (USW)
- Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)

Full Day Learning

The OCBCC released our submission to the Early Learning Advisor Charles Pascal with a vision full day learning for 4 and 5 year olds as a part of a comprehensive child care system in Ontario. That means affordable care for families, child care services for every child in Ontario and a significant wage increases for Early Childhood Educators across the province.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has been advocating for a universal, not-for-profit, quality early learning and care system that is accessible and affordable for all parents since 1981

The OCBCC working group discussions were consistently framed from a "systems building" perspective. The central question the group focused on was, "How will the delivery of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds positively contribute to the development of a full system of early learning and care for children, newborn to 12 years of age?"

Ontario needs a system of early learning and care that meets the developmental and social needs of children and the economic needs of their parents. The development of a universal service for four- and five-year-olds must be done within the framework of developing a whole system.

Ontario's current provision of early learning and care is fragmented, inaccessible and unaffordable. Outside of the provision of junior and senior kindergarten, which is funded through the public education system, the cost of early learning and care is covered through parent fees. Subsidies are available based on income, but they are not universal. There is not enough public investment to meet the needs of parents with young children.

There is strong consensus that moving away from the current funding mechanism and extending the principles of "public delivery" to early learning and care would be a tremendous system-building step.

The OCBCC discussion reflects the experience of the child care sector. Many past political promises have resulted in ill-defined short-term programs that have only added to service fragmentation. Therefore, a primary concern that emerged again and again was that if FDL is implemented without a system-building approach, it will lead to more fragmentation and instability in an already fragile network of services. The success of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds is predicated on implementing it within a systems framework that builds on existing assets and promising practices.

There is a need to ensure that this opportunity for expansion does not erode existing service delivery for families, nor provide opportunity for profit provision to expand in the sector.

Federal Election



Along with the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, we provided educational materials to our members. We held events to highlight Canada's poor international standing with regard to funding early learning and child care programs.

We commissioned a poll showing widespread support for investments in early learning and child care programs and reacted to each party's position on funding. We continue to advocate for early learning and child care at the Federal level.

Child Care Management Guide / Smart Treasurer E-learning Tool

In March we finalized the revised and updated Child Care Management Guide!

Section Topics:

Introduction; Planning and Purpose; Making it Legal; Governance; Financial Management; Human Resource Management; Health & Safety and Nutrition; Program for Children and Families

The Guide has been revised to reflect current legislation and management practices and comes with many new policy and procedure samples of for downloading and customizing. The Child Care Management Guide III will provide community based child care programs with learning and management tools and can also be used as a more formal learning text in ECE programs at Colleges across Ontario.

Smart Treasurer E-Learning Module

In addition to the Guide we will be launching a custom developed e-learning module focused on financial oversight. The "Smart Treasurer" e-learning module will build skills for effective financial oversight in a concise, easy to adopt online training program directed at volunteer parent board members and centre supervisors for community based child care programs.

The material is drawn directly from the Financial Section of the Child Care Management Guide. Through introductions, interactive questions and print out forms, the Smart

Treasurer can help any board or staff member learn where the money comes from and how to account for spending as well as how to plan for the future.

The Child Care Management Guide III and Smart Treasurer have been produced with the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation

Equal Pay Coalition



Historically, men and women tended to work in different jobs. Even today, in Canada 70% of women with paid employment are concentrated in a few female-dominated sectors included health, teaching, clerical, sales and service. This sex segregation of work has been and continues to be linked with wage discrimination and low pay.

In general, work traditionally or predominantly done by women is paid less than work traditionally or predominantly done by men regardless of the value of the work to the employer or the consumer. The more heavily women are concentrated in a job, the less it pays.

This has created a significant wage gap between men and women.

Pay equity legislation works to eliminate that discrimination and close the wage gap. In 1987, the year before Ontario's Pay Equity Act came into force, comparing average yearly full time salaries; women earned only 64% of what men earned. After almost twenty years of pay equity laws, women now earn 71% of what men earn.

Pay equity works. But the Pay Equity Commission has expressed concern that one broader public sector and private sectors are substantially not complying with the law. The Act must continue to be enforced and wage discrimination must be eliminated. This is especially true in the proxy sector – workers who are not government employees but work in sectors with significant public funding, like early learning and child care. Pay Equity has been difficult to achieve and maintain in our sector.

The Equal Pay Coalition held a year's worth of activities to draw attention to the anniversary of pay equity legislation in Ontario. We collected postcards, held events and had several political meetings including the Minister of Labour and staff at the Ministry of Finance.

We participated in the Pay Equity Commission anniversary conference.

Mr. McGuinty, Stop the Cuts to Child Care

The lack of funding in the 2009 Provincial Budget means cuts to early learning and child care programs and subsidies for parents to help pay for child care.

The OCBCC is leading a campaign to Stop the Cuts to child care by facilitating meetings between parents and MPP's to talk about the importance of early learning and child care programs – for children, families and communities.

Working with coalition partners

Throughout the course of every year OCBC board members and staff have many opportunities to work with coalition partners in a variety of ways, including sitting on boards, participating in conferences, speaking engagements, special projects and campaigns.

The following is a list of activities the coalition engaged in with our partners. Any omissions are regretted as we have enjoyed and valued our work with each and every partner:

City of Toronto Consultation Full Day Learning May 2008
OCBCC Queen's Park Lobby, June 2008
Common Table Forum on Full Day Learning June 2008
Chatham Forum on Full Day Learning, August 2008
Launch of Waitingforchildcare.ca Event, Ryerson University, September 2008
CUPE Forum on Full Day Learning, October 2008
OFL Women's Lobby, October 2008
NDP Women's Conference Panel, December 2008
Federal Budget Response, January 2008
Finance Minister's Roundtable February 2009
International Women's Day, March 2009
Provincial Budget Response March 2009
Presentation to City of Toronto Consultants, Smart Treasurer E-learning tool, march 2009
ETFO Convention Panel, April 2009
OPSEU Convention, April 2009

- ☐ OFL Women's Committee
- ☐ Ryerson / George Brown Student Child Care Coalition
- ☐ Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada – Board Member
- ☐ Code Blue Campaign for Child Care – Steering Committee Member
- ☐ The Common Table on Childhood Development and Care in Ontario
- ☐ Ontario Alternative Budget – Working Group Member
- ☐ Campaign 2000 – Steering Committee Member
- ☐ Ontario Federation of Labour Women's Committee
- ☐ Equal Pay Coalition
- ☐ 25 in 5 Poverty Reduction Network
- ☐ Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care – Board Member

Membership Information

Individual Membership

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Students / Unwaged / Retired..... | \$30.00 / per year |
| Child Care Worker..... | \$37.50 / per year |
| All other individuals | \$60.00 / per year |

Organizational Membership

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Local Groups, Coalitions, Home Child Care Agencies | \$100.00 |
| Businesses, Early Years Centres, other organizations..... | \$260.00 |
| Organization members, Child Care Centres spaces-up to 50 | \$190.00 |
| Organization members, Child Care Centres spaces-up to 75 | \$215.00 |
| Organization members, Child Care Centres spaces-up to 100 | \$240.00 |
| Organization members, Child Care Centres spaces-more than 100 | \$260.00 |
| Organization members, Child Care Centres spaces-more than 1000... | \$1000.00 |

Toronto Child Care Programs, add \$70 for automatic dual membership in the Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care.

Organizational Membership includes:
A Guide to Child Care in Ontario resource book, access to
employee benefit package, RRSP plan package, Program
Insurance and Officer's Liability Insurance, Some Restrictions
Apply

**Contact us at info@childcareontario.org
or 416-538-0628/1-800-594-7514
for more information and to join.**