

# Child Care Watch

Your source for news about child care advocacy



## OCBCC E-Newsletter!

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## Child Care Closures

### Chronic underfunding is starting to show

A recent report from OMSSA, the Ontario Municipal Social Service Association, the managers of child care, tells us that 200 rural, remote and northern child care programs centres are at immediate risk of closure. We know these are very tough financial times for all early learning and child care programs. Without funding to sustain early learning and child care programs, chronic underfunding and impacts from Ontario's full-day kindergarten program put many centres at risk of closure.

To read the OMSSA report, please [click here](#).

To read transcripts of the discussion on this topic that took place on May 30th at Queen's Park during Question Period, please [click here](#).

### Progress Child Care Faces Closure

Progress Child Care in Toronto has received a lot of attention in recent days. Staff at Progress Child Care in Scarborough and the City of Toronto was notified on the evening of Thursday, June 9th, that the centre would be closing on the afternoon of Friday the 10th. The centre simply did not have the funds to pay creditors and suppliers and continue to operate. Progress is currently still running after a small advance from the City but we don't know how the situation will play out in the long run.

**Progress is not alone** - we know that every child care program in Ontario is facing difficult times. We have recently heard of two other child care programs in the Greater Toronto Area, totaling nearly 200 spaces combined, which have shut their doors in recent weeks. Many other organizations are closing rooms, downsizing programs, and raising fees.

It is clear that the early learning and child care community needs to stand together, with a common voice and call for stable funding to sustain our programs.

When a centre closes dozens of families are left with no access to child care and few alternatives nearby while qualified staff find themselves jobless. Let's not let that happen. With licensed child care for only one in five kids, we can't afford to lose a single space.

### **What should my program do? It's time to plan**

To help to plan for the future and for child care centres experiencing trouble, we have developed resources to help assess challenges and plan for the future.

Our [Early Years Program Impact Kit](#) can be downloaded for free and contains tools to help child care centres plan and move forward. It was designed to help child care centres that are facing financial trouble and/or the possibility of closure or merger in the near future. Fact sheets and check lists will help you assess the financial situation in which you find yourselves, begin discussions with the board as well as other community stakeholders who could be helpful to your centre moving forward. [Click here](#) to download the kit.

It is because of these difficult financial times that the OCBCC has a sector-wide survey. If your centre has not completed the survey, please go to:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/financialpressuresurvey> (Notre sondage est aussi disponible [en français](#)). We need to hear from you so we can bring these realities to our meetings with Ministry officials. If you need advice or support, let us know!

The sites for years 4 and 5 of full-day kindergarten have now been released ([click here](#) for lists of schools for each year) and the Conservative platform announced that if elected they will continue to implement full-day kindergarten as scheduled. That means we all now know where we stand, and it is time to plan ahead as best we can.

### **What can you do to make a difference? Put child care on the public agenda**

Let the Minister of Education and your MPP know that you support child care funding. Go to [www.waitingforchildcare.ca](http://www.waitingforchildcare.ca), enter your postal code, and the site will do the rest! In your message, mention Progress's closure and the financial struggles experienced by *all* child care programs across the province. With 4 out of 5 children without access to licensed child care, we cannot afford to lose a single space.

For more information on closures, news coverage, and OCBCC actions, please [click here](#).

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**Provincial Election October 6th, 2011**

## Putting child care and early learning on the public agenda!

Ontario will have a provincial election this fall, and each of us must do what we can to put child care on the agenda and ensure that the political parties are clear about their position on child care.

Candidates in our communities must know that we will be voting for child care, and that we need to hear a strong commitment from each party for funding to create more affordable high quality spaces and ensure decent wages for ECEs.

Get informed about the underfunding of child care, and help raise awareness in your community.

Download and print these information sheets:

-Fact Sheet: [Overview of child care underfunding, staff shortages and impacts of Ontario's early learning program on child care](#)

-Pamphlet: [I'm Voting for Child Care!](#) Sample questions for candidates and canvassers.

-A [sign](#) to put up in your window, centre, or any other public space.

**Take action!** Advocacy doesn't have to be serious or time-consuming. Check out our list of small actions you can do in as little as 5 minutes or less! "[What can I do if I only have...](#)"

Materials are available to order for free. Postcards and stickers are also available now! [Click here](#) to download the order form



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### **Update: Amendments and regulations concerning extended day programming in schools**

On June 8th, 2011 the Ministry of Education released EL4: Regulatory Amendments Respecting Full-Day Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten and Extended Day and Third Party Programs. The regulations regarding the extended day expand on the amendments which opened up the door to third party providers continuing to run these programs. One new element, however, was the regulation that the operator must, barring certain conditions, be not-for profit.

This regulation would *not* have put in place without the strong advocacy of the Coalition and other community partners who urged the Ministry to take quality into account in their amendments and regulations.

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### **Quebec's child care program pays for itself, report says - proof we can do it here!**

At a forum held at the Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development in Toronto, economists argued that according to their analysis of Quebec's popular \$7-a-day program, governments that say they can't afford to invest in affordable child care are wrong.

Pierre Fortin, an economics professor at the University of Quebec at Montreal, presented his findings indicating that for every dollar Quebec invests it recoups \$1.05 while Ottawa receives a 44-cent windfall.

The program was introduced gradually in 1997, and by 2008, about 70,000 more women with young children had entered the workforce who would not otherwise have been working, a 3.8 per cent increase, Fortin found. The ripple effect of their employment pumped an additional \$5.2 billion into the Quebec economy, boosting the province's Gross Domestic Product by 1.7 per cent.

If a similar program existed in Ontario, it would send another \$1.2 billion to \$1.3 billion to Ottawa, Fortin estimates.

For more information, [click here](#).

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## **Mothers For Child Care**

Concerned mothers and community organizations came together to form a Task Force to ensure that mothers' voices are included in policy discussions about the lack of accessible, affordable, high-quality child care in Toronto. The Task Force held hearings and discussions across the city, and administered an online survey. The report, "I should have Applied Before I was Pregnant: How Child Care in Toronto Fails Mothers", was released at City Hall on Friday, June 17th. To read it, please [click here](#).

This project is an example of the power of the parent voice. When parents come together and voice their concern, media and politicians listen. You can do a similar campaign in your community by creating a parent group to talk about child care or holding a get-together for parents to talk about the issues they've faced in accessing or affording child care. If you would like to launch a similar campaign in your community and have interest from other community members, contact us!

For more information on the project, the report and media response, please [click here](#).

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## **Inspection reports and licensing information now available online**

The province has now made it much easier for parents to view information on licensing and inspections to child care centres. Inspection reports for the past three years for licensed centres, including home-based operations, can now be searched online. You can search by postal code, age group of the child and the type of program. It also allows searches based on the licensed program or operator name, and there is also a list of all available centres in a municipality.

This development came out of the work of many advocates around the province to hold the province accountable to their promise to increase the availability of this information. After concerns were made public, New Democrat Members of Parliament brought questions before the Ontario Legislature. The questions were first brought forward on April 18th. To read the discussion transcript, please [click here](#). To read the discussion from April 19th, [click here](#). The issue was brought forward to the house *again* on May 9th with respect specifically to serious incident reports. To read the transcript, please [click here](#).

This information will help parents understand how regulated the centres are, and what licensing staff are looking for.

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## **OCBCC Update - Strong team to stand up for child care elected at the OCBCC Annual General Meeting**

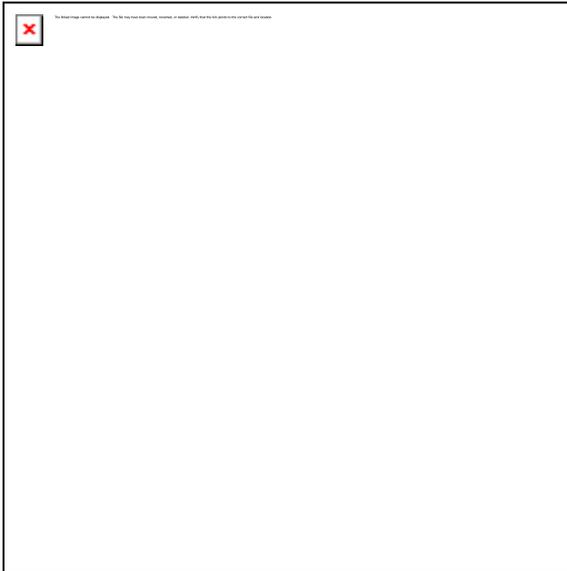
Over the past year, Ontario has begun to implement full-day kindergarten in schools across the province. As full-day kindergarten is implemented, early learning and child care programs will continue to face growing challenges as a result of chronic underfunding, a patchwork of services and lack of support for funding to sustain our programs through a time of transition.

In the next year, we will be working with early learning and child care programs and parents to secure adequate funding for high quality programs. We will also work to build relationships with our partners in education for an early learning and child care system that

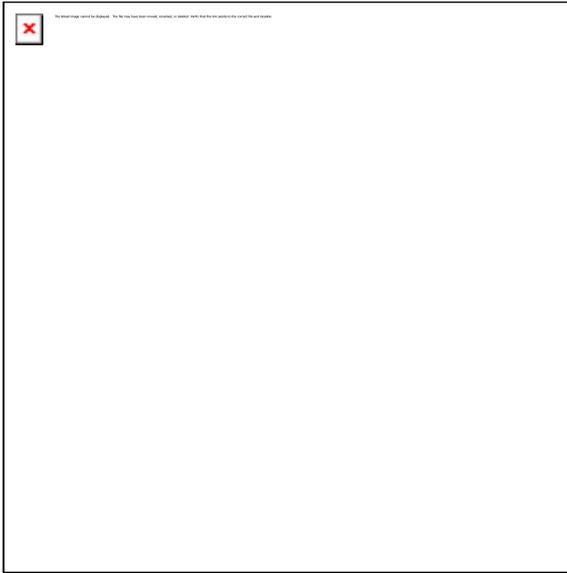
benefits all children and their families.

Early learning and child care programs are good for children, a vital service for parents and good for our economy. There has never been a more important time for each of us to speak up about the value of our work and how important early childhood education is for children, families and our communities.

Over the next few years, advocacy will be more important than ever. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care plays a critical role in providing a voice for our sector, supporting our programs, recognizing early childhood educators as specialists in education for young children and mobilizing support for our vision of high quality, affordable and universal programs. Our Executive members direct the work of the OCBCC. For more information on our partners, projects, briefs and submissions, please



[click here](#)



for our Annual Report.

### **List of Executive Members 2011 – 2012**

President: Tracy Saarikoski, Sudbury

Vice President: Carrol Anne Sceviour, Ontario Federation of Labour

Treasurer: Lynn Carlson, Dryden

Member at Large: Sheila Olan-McLean, Peterborough

Additional executive members:

Marg McPhail - Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Kathy Johnson - Canadian Union of Public Employees

Designate - AECEO

Karen Cole - Ottawa

Debbie Milne - Belleville

Chris Spardella - Ottawa

Marie Anne Saucier - Peterborough

Janet Teibo - Local 2484-25 staff

### **Advisory Council**

In order to have a network for communication across the Province; hear about what is happening regionally and assist with leadership development the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has an advisory council, elected at our AGM. In addition to our executive

members, our council members are:

Victoria Hunt - Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association

Elaine Kerr - Ontario Public Service Employees Union

Trish Hunt - Family Supports Institute of Ontario

Vivian McCaffrey - Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario

Gilary Massa - Canadian Federation of Students

Wendy Taylor - Canadian Federation of University Women

Central & GTA	Lucille Desjardins - Orillia - West Ridge Early Learning Centre
Central & GTA	Lee Anne Kelly - Durham - Schoolhouse Playcare Centres of Durham
Central & GTA	Sukhy JawandaBurlington - Parkview Children's Centre
Northeast	Jocelyn Kingsley-Gascon - Sudbury - Centre éducatif Étoile du Nord
Northeast	Chantal LabelleSudbury - College Boreal
Northwest	Barb Buffett - Kenora
Southwest	Jane Falconer - London - London Bridge
Southwest	Jane Bruinink - Mount Brygdes Sonshine Day Care
Southwest	Rachelle Campbell - Guelph - University of Guelph Early Learning Centre
Southwest	Catherine Fife - Waterloo Child Care Action Network
Toronto	Noah Keneally - ECE Student
Toronto	Jane Mercer - Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care
Toronto	Michele Lupa - Toronto - East York East Toronto Family Resources
Toronto	Diane Dobusz - Toronto - Pat Schulz Child Care Centre

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## Contact us

The OCBCC is committed to bringing about an Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) system that is not-for-profit and publicly funded, universally accessible, and high quality.

[Click here](#) to Join the OCBCC

To visit the OCBCC web site, [click here](#).

Please consider joining the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Student Memberships are \$30.00 / year.  
Child Care Worker: \$37.50 / year  
All Other Individuals: \$60.00 / year  
Organizational Memberships start at \$100.  
Join today! [Click here](#) for the membership form.

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Looking for child care news? Go to [www.childcareontario.org](http://www.childcareontario.org)  
Having trouble finding child care? Having trouble paying for child care? Go to [www.waitingforchildcare.ca](http://www.waitingforchildcare.ca)



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