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Child Care Watch

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In the May 2012 Edition:

1. [Ontario Budget – Child Care Funding Secured!](#)
2. [OCBCC AGM](#)
 - Welcoming our new president, Sheila Olan-MacLean
 - Thank you to Tracy Saarikoski
 - [Meeting with NDP Education Critic Peter Tabuns](#)
 - [Meeting with Minister of Education Laurel Broten](#)
3. [Join the movement: become a member of the Coalition](#)
4. [Join a committee: connect with members from across the province to make a difference](#)
5. [Advocacy in Action: Ontario's child care community raises profile of funding crisis](#)

Ontario Budget: Success in Advocacy

Tuesday March 27th was budget day in Ontario. Leading up to the budget, Ontario's child care community worked together to sound the alarm about the pressures facing the child care sector and the need for funding to stabilize our programs.

Unfortunately, not only was there no funding to sustain child care programs, there was no mention of child care at all in the 2012 Provincial budget.

Unwilling to back down and knowing the potential for negotiations in a minority government setting, the campaign continued. We continued to direct parents and staff to www.childcarematterstome.ca to send a message to their MPP. We also continued to profile centres feeling the pressure on our website www.childcarenow.ca.

Nearly a month later, and after significant pressure from the Ontario NDP, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that he would be proposing an infusion of **\$242 million in child care funding** over 3 years to the Ontario budget.

The consensus in the child care sector remains that \$287 million per year is the amount needed to stabilize our current programs. With this new announcement, next year will see stabilization funding of about \$150 million – far short of what is needed.

This new funding does not solve the child care crisis, it does not “save” all child care programs and we will continue to see closures of child care centres and reductions in numbers of spaces. However, it will go a long way towards keeping some programs open.

We want to thank the Liberal and NDP parties for making child care funding a priority at Queen's Park.

For more information on the budget, [click here](#) or read more about our campaign below.

OCBCC AGM

We held our annual general meeting and council meetings in Toronto over the course of May 8th and 9th. At these meetings, we elected our council and executive and had in-depth policy discussions with an emphasis on planning our actions and campaigns for the coming year.

We are proud to announce our new president is **Sheila Olan-MacLean**. Sheila is the executive director of Kawartha Child Care Services; an organization that is recognized across North America as a model of excellence in early learning and care programs and administration.

At this time we would like to thank **Tracy Saarikoski**, our outgoing president and executive director of

Teddy Bear Child Care, who served that role for three years. Tracy remains a member of our executive and will continue to be a strong force for the coalition. Her tireless efforts not only in her community of Sudbury but also across the province sitting at advisory tables and presenting at press launches. Thank you so much Tracy!

Meeting with NDP Education critic Peter Tabuns

As part of our planning for the year, the OCBCC executive met with key decision-makers at Queen's Park. As the Education Critic, Peter Tabuns is responsible for critiquing government policy and suggesting policy solutions on behalf of the Ontario NDP.

Peter Tabuns has asked multiple questions in the legislature with regards to the child care crisis and worked incredibly hard to help secure funding for our sector in the provincial budget. To read his last statement in the house in advance of the budget, [click here](#).

We discussed how to move forward to secure our programs and build for the future. Areas of discussion included bringing forward a private member's bill for a moratorium on licensing to for-profit child cares in the province, how to ensure new stabilization funding goes directly to our programs, and the ever-present concern of unregulated child care.



Meeting with Minister of Education Laurel Broten

The OCBCC executive also met with Minister of Education Laurel Broten to discuss the Ministry of Education's plans to implement the delivery of the new child care funding as well as their vision for 'modernizing child care.'

The Minister emphasized that she wants to work with us and other stakeholders, and would like concrete actions that can be taken to better the sector. She wants to take this opportunity to take a look at what is best for kids in Ontario, emphasizing the interconnectedness between child care and schools.

We emphasized the importance of open consultation with the child care sector and broader public when undergoing such changes (see below for information about joining our committee on consultation & outreach!) as well as the immediate threat posed to our sector by corporate child care's expansion within the province.



Join the movement: become a member of the Coalition

We can tell from our recent successes in the provincial budget campaign that advocacy works, and that when we come together as a sector we can make a difference.

It is clear that the OCBCC plays an influential role. With a staff of just two people, we have worked hard

every day to advocate for child care funding. But to continue to fund our work, as well as connect with frontline staff, we need every child care centre to become a member of the Coalition.

It is more important than ever that we work together to protect our child care system. Membership in our coalition helps you join with us and our other members, strengthening our collective voice toward the goal of establishing a high quality, affordable, publicly funded, non-profit and regulated child care system.

Coalition is funded by member fees and this means we need your membership support more than ever.

What's in it for you? Benefits of membership include:

- Child care insider e-updates about once a month or whenever there is breaking news about child care in Ontario
- Member rates on publication
- Organizational members are eligible for comprehensive insurance & benefits packages tailored specifically for child care programs
- Automatic membership with the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
- Opportunity to join one of our committees and get involved in child care campaigns
- Becoming part of the collective voice standing up for child care here in Ontario

Not sure if you're a member? Want to know more? Get in touch! [Send us an e-mail.](#)

To pay online to become a member, [click here.](#)

Join a committee: connect with members from across the province to make a difference

During our discussions at our AGM, an emerging theme was our need to get back to the grassroots – consulting and forming relationships, building consensus, organizing, getting local media, building our OCBCC council.

As a way to involve more members in the OCBCC we have set up three committees: a child care worker & ECE appreciation day committee; a communications & action committee; and a consultation & outreach committee. These committees are a great way to get involved in a specific area that interests

you, get involved in the work we do at the Coalition, and meet (via email, teleconference, etc.) other child care advocates across the province.

For more information and to get involved, [send us an e-mail!](#)

Advocacy in Action: Ontario's child care community raises profile of funding crisis

Leading up to the budget we mobilized thousands of parents to contact their MPP as part of www.childcarematterstome.ca. Helping parents speak out about the importance of child care is the most effective way of showing the value of child care.

Putting a face on the crisis for child care centres: www.childcarenow.ca shows the vital work that you do and what is at stake if we lose our community-based child care programs. Leading up to the budget we released a profile every day and shared it through social media. A letter was sent to local MPP's to alert them of the profile.

On Friday April 20th, our coordinator Andrea Calver spoke at the press conference launching the new campaign – We Are Ontario. [WE ARE ONTARIO](#) is a grassroots coalition of labour and community groups that believe that good jobs and public services are essential for economic recovery. Together, we are calling on the Ontario Government to invest in people, not profit.

On Saturday April 21st 2012 thousands of Ontarians from across the province came together at Queen's Park to stand up for the Ontario they believe in. The child care community was proud to stand alongside the labour movement, community activists, parents, and kids to stand up for public services and good jobs.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care's Katie Arnup spoke out about the shameful fact that 4 out of 5 Ontario kids do not have access to a licensed child care space. This amazing event was captured on video by Alex Lisman:

About the OCBCC

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.

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

Follow us on Twitter: [@ChildCareON](#) or <http://twitter.com/ChildCareON>

Having trouble finding child care? Having trouble paying for child care? Go to www.waitingforchildcare.ca



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