

**Emergency funding needed
to keep hundreds of child care centres from closing**

October 20, 2011

TORONTO – The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care sent a letter of welcome to the Hon. Laurel Broten, who was named Minister of Education today by Premier Dalton McGuinty. The letter also alerts Minister Broten to the immediate crisis of an upcoming wave of child care closures.

The money is a temporary solution to an ongoing funding crisis in child care and problems with how funding is delivered. Emergency funding will keep centres from closing before the province can find a more permanent solution in the spring budget.

“This is not a looming crisis, it is one that has arrived. Child care centres are already beginning to announce their closures. We’re not talking about a couple of centres, we’re talking about hundreds of daycares potentially closing province-wide.” Says Tracy Saarikoski, President, OCBCC.

A report released in May by the Ontario Municipal Social Service Association revealed that more than 8,100 children in rural and Northern Ontario could lose their child care, including more than 500 with special needs. At least 52 centres have already closed in the past two years, and 200 more are in imminent danger, as are 150 home care providers. These closures could leave some 90 communities without local, licensed child care options.

The situation is no better in cities. In Toronto, five wards have been identified as at-risk to lose more than half of their current child care centres. Thirteen more wards are at-risk to lose 25-49 percent. Progress Childcare Centre in Scarborough and the 75-year-old Bond Infant and Child Care are likely to become the next two victims of this flawed funding model.

“A collapse of the community based child care sector means Ontario will lose thousands of jobs in the sector,” says Saarikoski.

A copy of the letter is at www.childcareontario.org

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