

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: AECEO & OCBCC COMMUNITY SURVEY ON THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE *CHILD CARE AND EARLY YEARS ACT*

The Ontario government is proposing changes to the *Child Care and Early Years Act*. The proposed regulations would make substantial changes to age ranges, staff to child ratios and group sizes (called "Schedule 2"); staff qualifications; before- and after-school programs; and discusses the introduction of an unlicensed child care registry.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care carried out an online survey on the changes with 2,443 respondents (1,693 Early Childhood Educators and 741 parents with children in child care). The survey found overwhelming opposition to most of the proposed regulatory changes. Respondents were especially concerned about changes to age groups, staff to child ratios and qualifications.

### AGE RANGES, RATIOS AND GROUP SIZES

- More than three quarters of respondents were opposed to all of the government's age group and ratio proposals ("Schedule 2"):
  - 90% of respondents were opposed to combining Infant and Toddler age groups
  - 87% opposed proposed changes placing younger children into Preschool age groups
  - 81% opposed weakening the staff to child ratio in school-age groups
  - Respondents were concerned that proposals would negatively impact the quality of child care; children's safety and well-being; and staff well-being.

### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

- The majority of respondents opposed all of the proposed changes to staffing qualifications:
  - 62% opposed redefining "qualified employees" to include other qualifications than Registered Early Childhood Educator;
  - 68% opposed allowing unqualified short-term supply staff to replace qualified staff;
  - 65% opposed relaxing a requirement that supervisors have experience in licensed child care.

### BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- 48% of respondents were opposed to a proposal to remove a three-hour limit from recreation programs, which would allow them to function as before- and after-school child care. Only 21% were in favour, 31% unsure.

### UNLICENSED CHILD CARE REGISTRY

- Many respondents expressed confusion over what this proposal would look like - including whether it would be a mandatory or voluntary registry or whether it would provide any oversight. 60.7% of respondents were either opposed or unsure of the registry, with only 39% in support.