



COALITION ONTARIENNE POUR
de meilleurs services
éducatifs à l'enfance



ONTARIO COALITION FOR
Better Child Care



A PUBLICLY FUNDED CHILD CARE SYSTEM IS KEY TO CLOSING THE GENDER WAGE GAP

Statement for Equal Pay Day – April 20, 2015

Child care has long been acknowledged as a necessary component in closing the gender wage gap in two important ways. First, the lack of affordable, high quality child care continues to limit women's opportunities to participate in on-going, full-time work. Second, child care is still a firmly entrenched 'female job ghetto' in which the predominately female workforce continues to be underpaid and undervalued.

The Premier has given the Minister of Labour as well as the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues a mandate to close Ontario's gender wage gap. This commendable commitment will require both a sufficient supply of affordable, high quality child care and a properly compensated workforce to provide child care services. As parent fees are already out of most families' reach, a successful gender wage gap strategy will require moving to a publicly-funded child care system rather than relying on parent fees to maintain services and cover good wages.

Ontario cannot close the gender wage gap without publicly funding a child care system.

Limited public funding has resulted in inadequate growth in services, reliance on privatized services and unregulated arrangements, inequitable access for families, unaffordable fees and ongoing concerns with quality. Chronic underfunding has further resulted in constant pressure to keep wages low, as staff wages are directly tied to parent fees. Thus, the mostly female child care workforce will continue to bear the brunt of the chronic underfunding of child care services despite Ontario's recent commitment to a modest wage enhancement.

Trying to address child care wages in a piecemeal way in the absence of a publicly funded system will continue to be as ineffective and ultimately unsuccessful as it has been since Ontario's first wage enhancements in the 1980s. Building a comprehensive system of regulated child care with a professional workforce requires focused policy, a systemic approach and government commitment to sustained public funding.

We welcome Ontario's commitment to a strategy for closing the gender wage gap and look forward to making child care a priority from two perspectives: first, as a fundamental support for working mothers and second, to support the thousands of women working in child care to earn a decent, professional wage that reflects the value of their work.

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