



Ontario budget not enough to modernize child care Modest funding boost still leaves too many children behind

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, April 23, 2015

Today's Ontario budget puts forward modest increases in child care funding, but we are still a very long way from the comprehensive child care system that Ontario families need.

Today's budget announcement of \$120 million in capital funds over 3 years for child care spaces in schools is certainly very welcome, but it needs to be paired with a real child care strategy to make it work.

"New child care in schools is certainly good news, but we still have a long road to make our vision of child care a reality in Ontario. We know that many child care programs in schools are currently struggling," said OCBC President Sheila Olan-Maclean.

Meanwhile, money provided through the funding formula will increase by a modest \$44.5 million. To put this figure in context, Ontario child care advocates recommended \$300 million to address the twin crises of sky-high parent fees and closures of high quality public and non-profit programs across the province.

"Today's budget trumpets the Ontario government's child care record. But we need to temper that self-congratulation with a dose of reality. There are still only child care spaces for 1 in 5 Ontario children, and we have the least affordable parent fees in the country," said OCBC's Public Policy Coordinator Carolyn Ferns.

Today's Ontario budget re-committed to increasing the \$1/hr wage enhancement for child care staff next year, a key promise to child care workers from the last budget. Many questions still swirl about the roll-out of this enhancement as well as the status of previous wage grants. "Given the government's recent promise to close the gender wage gap, we could certainly see more done to support the workforce and to build a real system of child care in Ontario," said OCBC partner Shani Halfon of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario.

In a federal election year it is worth noting that Ontario has pledged to work with any willing federal government to bring in a national child care strategy. This commitment should be applauded, but the province can still do more. We need a real child care plan with targets and timetables to show we are ready to go in Ontario.

"We know that there is no better way to invest in Ontario and in Ontarians, than investing in child care. It stimulates local economies, it's an important part of social infrastructure, and it supports the parent workforce. While today's budget provides some modest support, we are still playing catch-up when we should be showing leadership," said OCBC president Sheila Olan-Maclean.

Contact:

Carolyn Ferns
Public Policy and Government Relations Coordinator
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
416-538-0628 x 4 / cell: 647-780-7440