

Speaking notes to guide your MPP meeting

1. Introduction

- Introduce yourselves: say what you do and where you are from. Be sure to point out if you are the MPP's local constituents.
- Thank the politician for meeting with you today.
- Confirm how long you have for the meeting.
- Say that you are here as part of a *broad coalition* of parents, educators and organizations concerned about child care in Ontario.
- Indicate what you want to get out of the meeting: To share your perspective on child care in Ontario and to ask for their *personal* commitment to be a child care champion by learning more about the issue, and supporting continued, stable funding to licensed child care.
- If possible, one person in your group should share a short, personal story about their experience, either as a parent or educator, which explains the child care challenge in Ontario. Keep in brief but powerful, under 3 minutes.

2. The child care system in Ontario needs protection, stability and further investment

- There are over 400,000 Ontario children and their families that depend on licensed child care every day. We are counting on you to protect current child care funding.
- The government reversed cuts to child care this year, but has signalled that cuts are just on hold until next year. Explain how tight child care budgets already are and how cutbacks will impact services.
- The government has agreed to continue the \$2 per hour wage enhancement grant for educators. This is good news, but not all that is needed to ensure decent work in child care. Ontario's early childhood workforce strategy ("Growing Together") recommended moving to a wage scale by April 2020.
- Going forward, the best way to support Ontario's families and hard-working educators, is through action on **3 Big Ideas**:
 - 1. Low fees or no fees for families:** We need to fund licensed child care directly to help lower fees.
 - 2. Decent work and pay for educators:** We need continued support for the *Early Learning and Child Care Workforce Strategy*, including establishing a wage scale by April 2020.
 - 3. Expansion of non-profit spaces:** There are still only spaces for fewer than 1:3 kids, and many areas of the province are "child care deserts". We must continue to expand – this means both capital and operating dollars for new programs.
- A note on for-profit child care: the government has opened up public funding to for-profit child care, including allowing them in our public schools. This should be reversed. Explain that the most efficient and accountable use of public funds is to direct public dollars to public and non-profit child care. This ensures that all funding is going directly to programming and educators, not to profits.

3. What the Ontario government/their party can do

If the MPP is Conservative:

- Child care is a major issue for the people in your riding, a local issue that you must address.
- We both know that child care is a good investment. Even the governor of the Bank of Canada says that a subsidized child-care program will significantly boost the Canadian economy by increasing women's participation in the paid labour force and positively impacting child outcomes.
- Child care isn't a partisan issue. Ontario needs to continue stable, predictable funding to licensed child care to support families, grow spaces and support the workforce.
- The CARE Tax Credit isn't the best use of public dollars in this area. While it provides modest support to some parents, it doesn't help create child care spaces where they are needed, support the workforce, nor provide adequate financial support for most families.
- The best "bang for your buck" is to fund licensed and non-profit child care. It's high quality and all funding goes to service provision. The non-profit sector provides most of Ontario's child care and is well positioned to expand where it's most needed.

If the MPP is NDP:

- Thank you for the NDP's continued support of child care, especially understanding the need to support public and non-profit child care. Thank you for your strong support in the legislature. We need the NDP to continue to make child care a defining issue.
- As the Official Opposition, please continue to use every tool available to protect child care services that families rely on, wage support for educators and continue to put forward a vision of universal child care.
- Ontario has an Early Childhood Workforce Strategy with a commitment to introduce a wage scale by April 2020. We want to hold the current government to this obligation.
- We are deeply concerned that the government's funding cuts have only been put on hold until next year. We want to create a unified front with local advocates, municipal leaders and the Opposition to explain the importance of investing in child care. Can we work together on this?

If the MPP is Liberal:

- The previous Liberal government's investments in child care were game changing. You were making Ontario a leader on child care. Please continue to make child care a defining issue.
- We are continuing to work to ensure that key commitments made under the Liberal government are protected. For example, Ontario has an Early Childhood Workforce Strategy with a commitment to introduce a wage scale by April 2020. We want to hold the current government to this obligation.
- We are deeply concerned that the government's funding cuts have only been put on hold until next year. We want to create a unified front with local advocates, municipal leaders and the Opposition to explain the importance of investing in child care. Can we work together on this?

4. Closing/commitment

- Ask the MPP if they will commit to protecting child care and advocating for stable funding and further investment.
- Remind them that you are part of a broad coalition looking for "child care champions." Ask if they will have their photo taken with you and the frame/sign indicating that they are a #ChildCareChampion.
- Thank them for meeting with you, leave behind the "Needed: Child Care Champions at Queen's Park" document and your card or contact information
- Offer to help put the MPP in touch with other members of the child care community, arrange a centre tour or assist them with holding a local town hall or roundtable on the issue.