



Ontario child care cut hits poor kids, results in 6,400 job losses

TORONTO -- A planned \$63.5 million cut to Ontario's child care programs would eliminate thousands of jobs and leave 7,600 children from low income families without child care.

The Centre for Spatial Economics crunched the numbers on the impact of the provincial government eliminating \$63.5 million that supports child care fee subsidies for single and low-income parents. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) who commissioned the study is tabling it at the province's budget hearings today and will be available for comment at 10:30 a.m. outside Rm. 151, Queen's Park.

"The report shows there's a lot more at stake than lost child care spaces," says OCBCC Coordinator Andrea Calver. "A \$63.5 million cut to subsidized child care would result in a \$148.3 million drop in Ontario's GDP through job losses and increased demand for welfare. The losses far outweigh Ontario's contribution for child care subsidies are a lifeline for vulnerable children and their families."

The study shows \$63.5 million in child care cuts would result in:

- The disappearance of 7,600 subsidized child care spaces for children from low-income families
- The elimination of 1,800 child care jobs and another 1,100 jobs in the related economy
- Another 3,480 jobs vacated as parents are forced to leave work because they have no other child care options;
- Growing welfare rolls as out-of-work parents turn to social assistance.

"The future is now", says Rosemary White, Executive Director of Bond Child and Family Development Centre in Toronto. Her program provides care and intervention services for children with autism and other special needs and children from low income and refugee families. "We have a long waiting list of families who need support yet 39% of our spaces are vacant because of the subsidy freeze. Another cut and our program will close by September," she predicts.

The OCBCC is urging the Ontario government to front end the child care savings that will be realized from full day learning. The province has calculated a \$119-million savings in public child care costs as four and five year olds move into full day, school-operated programs. This money should be advanced to stabilize affected child care programs and expand learning and care options for younger children, the OCBCC says.