PETITION FOR EXTENDED-HOUR CHILD CARE IN THE REGION OF DURHAM

To the members of Durham Regional Council:

We, the undersigned, are concerned about the absence of child-care facilities that offer quality extended-hour service to working families in the Durham Region.

The pressures placed on working people today are many. For those forced to manage a stressful workload while raising a young family, the pressures are even greater.

Many of us work long shifts, some that extend into the late evening or in some cases over night, in order to make ends meet - whether in hospitals or auto plants; supermarkets or office buildings. During this time of economic instability, other young parents have made the choice to attend school to upgrade skills and are forced to handle sporadic school-work schedules that can be disruptive to family time. In all circumstances, Durham residents need access to quality, extended-hour child care.

The recently closed CAW Child Care Services centre was a model operation for extended-hour, quality care provided to CAW members at General Motors in Oshawa. This closure has left dozens of young families reeling, not only because it marks the end of an excellent facility, but also because there are no viable alternatives for similar extended-hour care in the Region.

All Canadians deserve access to quality child care. Just as we enjoy the benefits of universal health care, child care should be a right, not a privilege. Child care services should also meet the needs of working people and account for the changing realities of work. Based on a wide body of evidence, the economic and social impact of expanding access to public child care is substantial – from increasing the participation of woman in the workforce to helping keep working families out of poverty.

We ask that the Durham Region Council, through their Children's Services Division, provide the necessary funds to extend the hours of child care at municipal child care centres operating in our community.

We also ask that Children's Services Division directly engage members of the community, including workers in the child care services sector, in the process of determining the most appropriate locations and hours of operation for these centres.

Name (please print)	Address	Signature