

Questions for Candidates

The Early Learning and Child Care sector is going through enormous change.

While there is a role for the Federal government in funding child care and the municipal government in administering child care, the provincial government is primarily responsible for funding child care.

Other provinces have worked to improve high-quality child care. Our neighbours Quebec and Manitoba have affordable child care for families and funding to ensure decent wages and benefits for early childhood educators.

1. We need to make child care affordable for families.
2. We need more child care. Many child care centres are downsizing and at risk of closing because of chronic underfunding.
3. We need high-quality child care. Staffing shortages affect quality.

Personalize your question!

Politicians remember anecdotes. Talk about your kids, your family and your struggles. They will remember your story.

Show you care! These are important issues to tens of thousands of families just like you.

Here are some things that you and your community can do to make sure that your candidates running to represent you at Queen's Park hear loud and clear that people in your community want a child care plan that delivers a fully accessible, affordable, high quality, public system of child care and family support!

- ▶ Find out who your candidates are – go to your municipal website.
- ▶ Call their campaign offices for upcoming events in your riding where you can meet candidates and ask them about child care
- ▶ Attend an All-Candidates Debate – ask one of the questions on the sheet in this kit
- ▶ Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.
- ▶ JOIN with others.....form a groups of parents to raise the issue of child care in your riding.

I'm Voting
for Child Care!



Ontario's Provincial
Election – October 6,
2011

affordable child care

more child care spaces

high-quality child care

Sponsored by the Ontario Coalition for
Better Child Care.

For more info and resources on the
elections go to:

www.childcareontario.org

Questions for Candidates in the Provincial Election:

Funding:

Average costs for child care are \$10,000 to \$15,000 per year, per child. Child care is important for our economy and our communities, but many families can't afford the high cost.

Will your party commit to additional funding to make child care more affordable?

Access

4 out of 5 children in Ontario do not have access to licensed early learning and child care programs. Early childhood education gives our children the best start in life and should be a right for every child.

Will your party commit to additional funding to increase child care spaces so that 4 out of 5 of Ontario's children are no longer left out?

Quality:

The early years, from infancy to six years old, are a time of enormous brain development when children learn social, cognitive and behavioural skills that last a lifetime. Parents want high quality programs that will give our children the best start.

Will your party commit to additional funding to address the staffing shortage of qualified early childhood educators?

Strategic directions for early learning and child care

In the past ten years, child care programs have been transferred between 3 separate Ministries in government. Under all three political parties, we have seen many changes in policies and directions.

What is your vision for early learning and child care? For child care, what is working right now that needs to continue and what is not working that needs to change?

Past History – What Did Each Party Do When They Were in Government?

NDP 1990-1995

- conversion of for-profit child care centres to not-for-profit
- wage increases for child care staff and pay equity for the child care sector
- expansion of spaces

Conservative 1995 to 2003

- eliminated capital funding; cancellation of planned child care centres in schools
- review of wage grants and elimination of pay equity until a court settlement to continue government share of funding
- cut \$160 million from child care funding and downloaded costs to local municipalities.
- Used federal funds to create the network of Ontario Early Years Centres in each riding across Ontario

Liberal 2003 to current

- Used federal funds to create 22,000 new child care spaces
- in 2007 had a one-time only wage increase of 2% for child care staff
- stopped paying government share of pay equity payments after court settlement ran out in 2006
 - Implemented full-day kindergarten program for 4 and 5 year olds.