



The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

By email: [premier@ontario.ca](mailto:premier@ontario.ca)

The Hon. Minister of Education Stephen Lecce

Ontario Ministry of Education

Toronto, Ontario

By email: [minister.edu@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.edu@ontario.ca)

Re: The Child Care Sector is in Crisis and You Can Fix it

Thursday, November 24, 2022

Dear Premier Ford and Minister Lecce,

YWCA Ontario is a provincial coalition of YWCA Member Associations that serves more than 50,000 people each year across Ontario. We offer a range of programs designed to address the needs of women, girls and gender diverse people, including child care. Collectively, we provide more than 3,000 child care spaces across the province. We operate in smaller, rural areas such as St. Thomas, and in large, urban areas such as Toronto and Hamilton. No matter our location, we are all watching the same crisis unfold.

We are grateful that families are feeling relief through the reduction of fees from the Canada-Ontario child care plan. Now, more than ever, families need and deserve financial relief wherever possible. However, we know that lowering fees without simultaneously addressing the child care workforce crisis, is not sustainable in the long run.

Our concerns are twofold: We fear that continuing to ignore the workforce crisis in the child care sector will lead to the system's collapse. We are also extremely concerned by



the changes Ontario has made to the Canada-Ontario child agreement since its first signing in March 2022.

### Staffing Crisis

The staffing crisis in the child care sector is driven by low wages and a lack of decent work provisions. Ontario's plans to expand child care access are at risk as existing centres across Ontario are forced to close rooms and limit enrollment due to severe staffing shortages.

The proposed \$18 per hour minimum wage, which only applies to ECEs and RECEs, is far too low to attract the talent, skill and individuals the sector needs in order to expand to meet the demand for child care in Ontario.

That's why we are joining the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and other sector partners in calling on Ontario to create a workforce strategy that includes:

- A salary scale starting at \$25 per hour for all child care workers and \$30 per hour for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs);
- Benefits and pensions;
- Paid sick days;
- Professional development time; and,
- Paid programming time.

### Troubling Changes to CWELCC

The rollout of the Canada-Ontario child care plan is also worrying. Of greatest concern are the revisions made to the plan since signing in March 2022, and the lack of transparency in the community consultations process. Further, the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant that all child care providers are required to apply to is inequitable. Currently, the PWE only allows for the wages of some staff to be improved and is not permanent.



In August 2022, Ontario released revised funding guidelines which removed controls on undue profits, as well as the requirements for financial audits – two critical pieces that ensure accountability and the responsible use of public dollars.

Removing cost control and accountability measures from the Canada-Ontario child care plan allow for-profit operators to gain from public dollars, and put the sustainability of the plan at risk.

We call on the Ontario Government to reinstate the cost control and financial accountability measures that were first set out in the child care plan.

The future of child care is in your hands.

We understand that there is a provincial child care advisory table. Currently, there is no YWCA Ontario representation on this table, and despite our efforts, we have not discovered how an organization or coalition can join. We are hopeful to join the table and are requesting to be added to ensure the perspectives of our organizations and our expertise on nonprofit child care in Ontario can be shared.

As experts in providing high quality nonprofit child care, YWCA Ontario would welcome the opportunity to discuss the future of child care, including in an official advisory capacity. We are hopeful that together, we can create a child care system that prioritizes decent work and a fiscally responsible funding model.

Sincerely,

YWCA Ontario

- YWCA Cambridge
- YWCA Hamilton
- YWCA Toronto
- YWCA Muskoka
- YWCA St. Thomas Elgin
- YWCA Muskoka
- YWCA Sudbury
- YWCA Niagara Region
- YW Kitchener-Waterloo



- YWCA Durham
- YWCA Peterborough Haliburton

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