

OpEd: Ontario urged to act on decades of child-care research ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Re: Bill could redirect child-care cash, March 2

As Ontario plans for a desperately needed major expansion of services, child care needs transformation, not more of the same. Ensuring high quality, affordable and responsive child care requires planning and solid support so not-for-profit services can operate in small and large, urban and rural communities to serve families of all incomes and children with varying abilities/disabilities. Experience and substantial research show that for-profit child care is less likely to be high quality, less likely to serve low-income communities, less likely to include children with special needs and more likely to be transient.

It's time for Ontario to act on decades of research and experience. While Ontario's commitment to spend significant funds to create and sustain child care is encouraging, the best interests of children and families, the child-care workforce and Ontario taxpayers are that public funds all be directed to quality child-care services, not hived off to a shareholder/owner profit line.

In 2017, we're in a position to understand the risks involved in not learning from the experience of others. More than a decade ago, Australia witnessed extensive misuse of public child-care funds to fund private profits. The result? The largest for-profit operator, ABC Learning, was taken into receivership with costs to taxpayers calculated in the tens of millions. And the government? Left holding the diaper bag.

Let's make sure that Ontario doesn't repeat this fiasco. As many of us have advised for decades, kids are not for profit, especially if the goals are high-quality, affordable, accessible, responsive child care.

Laurel Rothman, Campaign 2000: End Child Poverty in Canada, Toronto

-reprinted from The Toronto Star

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