

Advocates call for down payment on affordable child care and decent work ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

To mark Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Appreciation Day on October 25th, advocates launch the Decent Work Charter and call for a down payment on the public funding needed to ensure professional pay for early childhood educators and provide affordable, high quality child care services for parents.

TORONTO, ONTARIO--(Marketwired - Oct. 25, 2017) - The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) and its partners are calling on the provincial government for enhanced, predictable public funding to achieve affordable, high quality services for families and decent work with professional pay for educators.

"We all welcome the expansion of 100,000 new child care spaces as Ontario begins to move toward a universally accessible system of child care. There are big challenges, however, in attracting and retaining the estimated 20,000 early childhood educators that will be required to build this system while also reducing parent fees which are the highest in the country," said Laurel Rothman of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Provincial work is underway to develop strategies to address the workforce challenges and to develop a plan for making child care affordable. There is optimism that when the province's report on affordability is tabled by February 2018, recommendations will set out how the burden on parents will be eased and how the current patchwork of market-based child care can be transformed to a planned system of publicly-funded services.

"We are encouraged that progress toward a workforce strategy for Ontario's child care and early years sector is also underway. Research shows that it's the educators that build and sustain quality in child care. A robust workforce strategy will address many issues including pay equity and fair compensation, appropriate working conditions and professional development - all key elements of decent work," commented Lyndsay Macdonald of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario.

"Ontario families have waited far too long for a coherent system of high quality early childhood education and care services, and we are not there yet. We must get it right. Getting it right also means serving indigenous families and communities well. From my decades of work with indigenous families, I know that they also want high quality, affordable child care," adds Lori Huston, RECE and single mother of two children in licensed child care from Thunder Bay.

Rothman adds, "If ECE salaries are to be appropriate and fees become affordable for all, public funding must increase and public policy must become more robust, if they do not, we will never achieve the goal of a universally accessible system of high quality child care that Ontario parents want and need."

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

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