Hard working child care advocates deserve our thanks for today's announcement [1]

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EXCERPTS

A big thank you goes to child care advocates for today's child care government announcement that promises free child care for up to a little more than a year prior to the start of junior kindergarten.

"There is no question that parents in Ontario desperately need access to more affordable child care. Parents and child care advocates have been working hard for years to try and get the government to make the substantive investments we need," says CUPE Ontario President Fred Hahn. "Though today's announcement does not come close to meeting the overall need, it is a move in the right direction."

Today's announcement promises free childcare for a little more than the year prior to junior kindergarten beginning in 2020. The announcement does not cover child care for children under two-and-a-half or for school age children.

"Free child care for a year is great for families who can find a child care space, but we need a few more details," says Carrie Lynn Poole-Cotnam, Chair of CUPE's Social Service Sector and treasurer of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. "We have serious concerns that the government has made no assurances that the funding will only go to public not-for-profit child care centres. Every cent of funding should be used to provide care and not used to subsidise profits for privatized child care centres."

"Today's announcement still requires parents to fully cover the cost of child care for babies and toddlers which is the most expensive period of care and is one of the biggest barriers for women getting back into the workforce," says Hahn. "While we acknowledge this will definitely help some parents, there is still much more to do."

"What we need is to build a universal affordable public child care system not piecemeal promises designed to win votes," says Poole-Cotnam. "We hope we will still see more details for rolling out a comprehensive plan that truly meets the needs of Ontario parents and provides decent wages for our child care workers."

CUPE is Ontario's community union, with more than 260,000 members providing quality public services we all rely on, in every part of the province, every day. CUPE Ontario members are proud to work in social services, health care, municipalities, school boards, universities and airlines.

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