

# Ontario shouldn't open the door to 'big-box' child care <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Star Editorial Board

**Source:** Toronto Star

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 1 Sep 2018

## AVAILABILITY

Read online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

Parents clamouring for child care cheered in 2016 when Ontario's Liberal government announced plans to spend as much as \$3.7 billion over five years to double the number of licensed spots for young children.

With licensed care in the province available for just 20 per cent of kids under age 4, the promise of 100,000 more spaces gave parents new hope.

Advocates were pleased, too. But they warned that without stricter guidelines on how new provincial funds should be spent, corporate child care operators would scoop up the money to grow their businesses and increase shareholder value at the expense of families desperate for quality care.

More than 30 years of research has shown that quality in public and non-profit child care is superior than in commercial operations. That's because quality is largely based on staff-child interactions. With no pressure to make a profit or pay shareholder dividends, non-profit daycares can afford to hire more qualified staff and offer better wages and working conditions. That translates into staff who can engage more effectively with their young charges.

Corporate and other for-profit child-care companies also have a history of lobbying governments for lower standards so they can maximize profits. And when global child-care corporations run into financial trouble, as happened to an Australia-based conglomerate about a decade ago, governments end up on the hook.

To avoid these risks, when the Liberal government began to ramp up child care spending in 2017 it wisely set caps on the amount of taxpayer money that could be spent on for-profit centres.

But in a troubling regulation change last month, Premier Doug Ford's government lifted the for-profit maximum thresholds, essentially opening the door to big-box corporate child care in Ontario.

The government argues that lifting the cap will address shortages by allowing more daycares to open. But at what cost to quality?

To be clear, small, owner-operated for-profits, which arguably play an important role in rural areas and rapidly growing suburbs, were not the target of the previous Liberal regulation.

The real concern was around international child-care chains. And that's why the Ford government's change is so troubling.

**Related link:**

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/18/09/ontario-shouldn%E2%80%99t-open-door-%E2%80%98big-box%E2%80%99-child-care>

**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/18/09/ontario-shouldn%E2%80%99t-open-door-%E2%80%98big-box%E2%80%99-child-care> [2]

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2018/09/02/ontario-shouldnt-open-the-door-to-big-box-child-care.html> [3]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856>