

Letter to Ahmed Hussen: Sustaining early learning and child care through the pandemic ^[1]

Author: Child Care Now, Canadian Child Care Federation & Childcare Resource and Research Unit

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts of letter

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, P.C., M.P.,
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

April 14, 2020

Dear Minister Hussen,

I am writing to you on behalf of Canada's three national early childhood education and child care organizations: Child Care Now (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada), Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF), and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (CRRU).

Both Child Care Now and CCCC wrote to you in March to alert you to the particular dangers COVID-19 poses for the early learning and child care sector (ELCC) in Canada, which is inherently fragile with few reserves to sustain the disruption and chaos that the pandemic has caused. In these and other communications, we have pleaded for a federally coordinated and supported initiative to sustain the ELCC sector so that licensed programs will still be in place to support Canada's economic recovery as we get through and past the pandemic.

Of course we are well aware of the large federal programs that have been instituted to help those business and non-profit organizations that have seen revenues drop, as well as the income-replacement measures designed to provide greatly needed financial support to individuals who suffer temporary or permanent job loss. However, our close monitoring of developments in the sector tells us that these measures are having limited and uneven success in helping ELCC providers and staff. Further, while some provinces and territories are providing some additional assistance to the sector, the diversity of approaches benefit some more than others, and some not at all. This is causing serious inequities within the sector within jurisdictions and between jurisdictions. We are fearful that Canada will emerge from the pandemic with greater gaps in ELCC services—gaps that will become major obstacles to economic growth, gender equity, and the wellbeing of families in the recovery period and beyond.

The ELCC sector is unlike any other; its survival depends on a distinct federal program to encourage a coordinated and equitable federal-provincial-territorial sustainability effort. Our organizations have developed the framework for such a program, relying on our extensive knowledge of the ELCC sector, and in consort with ELCC provider organizations, representatives of the ELCC workforce, and others. We attach to this letter and ask that you consider it seriously and urgently.

We would very much like to have a teleconference with you to elaborate on our proposal and discuss what further evidence you need to convince your Cabinet colleagues of the critical need for action.

Yours sincerely,

Morna Ballantyne
Executive Director
Child Care Now
(Canadian Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada)

c.c. Honourable Members of COVID-19 Cabinet Committee,
Honourable Minister for Women and Gender Equality
Don Giesbrecht, CEO, Canadian Child Care Federation
Martha Friendly, Executive Director, Childcare Resource and Research Unit

Related link: Plan to sustain Canada's Early Learning and Child Care sector through the COVID-19 pandemic

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