


The Ontario Federation of Labour's submission on proposed amendments to Ontario's Child Care and Early Years Act ^[1]

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 OFL CCEYA Submission Nov 2020.pdf ^[2]	1.25 MB

Children are one-third of our population and 100 per cent our future.

There is no better way to safeguard our collective future than knowing children have the best, safest care possible. Still, child care in Ontario astonishingly remains in a state of crisis under the Ford government's regime.

"Children are the most important people in our society, and we have to protect our children," said Ontario's Premier Doug Ford. "Children cannot protect themselves. They rely on us to make a decision."

Yet, the Ministry of Education is proposing regulatory changes to the Child Care and Early Years Act – as part of a five-year review – that jeopardizes the fabric of our future.

The proposed changes, allowing operators to group infants and toddlers, reduce staff-to-child ratios for some age groups and lower qualification requirements for staff, definitively sets the province back a step. Furthermore, there is no research base provided for the changes which have previously been refuted by Ontario's child care sector. One would expect a review of this magnitude – at a time when Ontarians, specifically parents who are already looking for concrete solutions to child care woes resulting from a global health pandemic – to present quality measures for young children, fund smaller group sizes, and make child care more affordable for families. Alas, the proposed plan presents quite the opposite and even calls for diminished labour standards.

Ontario is home to the most expensive child care in the country, across all age groups. Instead of building spaces that are affordable, high-quality, and publicly delivered, the proposed direction will leave parents paying more for less quality of care and attention for their children.

Affordability is not a trade-off for safety. The provincial government must set aside the proposed regulatory amendments that threaten the quality of child care for young children. Workforce retention cannot come at the price of trained staff. Placing more younger children into larger groups with fewer qualified staff is not the way to build a quality child care system.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) recently carried out an online survey on the proposed regulations with 2,443 respondents (1,693 Early Childhood Educators and 741 parents with children in child care). The survey found overwhelming opposition to most of the proposed regulatory changes. Respondents were especially concerned about changes to age groups, staff-to-child ratios and qualifications.

We demand public and effective services for all. This means establishing, investing in, and strengthening access to publicly delivered universal child care services and programs for all Ontarians.

It is due time the provincial government stop diluting regulations and work with the federal government to create tangible, effective policies that finally make child care a priority.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: legislation and regulation ^[4]

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/12/ontario-federation-labours-submission-proposed-amendments> [2]

https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/OFL%20CCEYA%20Submission_Nov%202020.pdf [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/legislation-and-regulation>