

Critiquing Ontario's childcare policy responses to the inextricably connected needs of mothers, children, and early childhood educators ^[1]

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Excerpted from abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the chronically inadequate childcare infrastructure in Canada and across much of the world. Government responses have been many and varied within and between countries, provinces, municipalities, and local communities. Embracing a feminist ethics of care lens, this paper examines how the needs of mothers, children, and early childhood educators were recognized as interconnected (or not) in Ontario's childcare policy discourse and action throughout the pandemic. Findings indicate that children were rarely discussed beyond being a "burden" to their parents (and therefore the economy) while children's and early childhood educators' childcare experiences and needs were largely absent in any policy discussion or action. The only group to receive widespread media and political attention were mothers, whose ongoing struggle to "balance" paid and unpaid (care) work became heightened and visible en masse throughout the pandemic. We offer overarching observations and recommendations for childcare policy stakeholders and actors as we look to build new possibilities for Canadian childcare beyond the pandemic.

Region: Ontario ^[4]

Tags: care economy ^[5]

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