

Ford government's inaction on child care is dangerous ^[1]

It must take conscious effort on behalf of Premier Ford to ignore the many calls for action on child care.

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EXCERPTS

The recent announcement that licensed child care would be kept open without access to PCR testing or reporting of outbreaks is, sadly, not shocking. But it is dangerous. So, too, are delayed and inadequate numbers of HEPA filters, N95 masks, and rapid tests for staff and families.

But after nearly four years of disregard for child care, the Ford government's antipathy toward this crucial sector is no longer surprising. Since their election in 2018, the Ford Conservatives have: cut millions of dollars in child care funding; loosened child care regulations; refused calls for pandemic pay; and failed to sign onto the federal child care plan.

Child care programs have been important supports for families through the pandemic and will be vital to our social and economic recovery. This is a penny that dropped for many people, including employers and governments all over the country, during the first waves of the pandemic. But not the Ford government. It remains stubbornly stuck in the past, expecting the child care sector and families to continue to do more with less, time and again.

It must take conscious effort on behalf of Premier Ford to ignore the many calls for action on child care. Child care advocates have now been joined by municipal leaders, chambers of commerce, employers, and public health leaders in calling for increased attention to child care.

The child care community has repeatedly alerted the province to the needs of families and educators. In May 2021, the "Forgotten on the Frontline" survey warned the provincial government of the impending workforce crisis that is now forcing programs to close rooms and limit enrolment.

The child care community's "Road map to Universal Child Care in Ontario" has set a safe path forward. Municipalities have passed motions calling for the province to do more for our youngest. Public health leaders have warned of the risks of keeping child care programs open without necessary safeguards.

At this point it's clear the Ford government has an ideological allergy to properly funding and supporting child care. This puts them out of step with federal and local governments and a majority of Ontarians. And it's putting our children and those who care for them at risk.

In the face of this latest crisis, community leaders and opposition politicians have called on the province to immediately restore PCR testing and public reporting, ensure booster shot priority and an adequate supply of N95s, rapid tests and HEPA filters for child care. On Thursday, the province bowed to calls for vaccination priority for educators and promised additional N95s are on the way.

But it shouldn't require a community campaign to get basic health and safety standards only halfway right.

The provincial election is less than five months away. On June 2nd Ontarians have the power to elect a government that doesn't treat the province's children, families and educators as an afterthought.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: health and safety ^[4]

advocacy ^[5]

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