

Urgent action needed on child care safety and viability: More than 50 experts and organizations send open letter to Premier Ford^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Premier Ford and Ontario political parties,

We are parents, Early Childhood Educators, child care workers, public health leaders, and concerned Ontarians.

We are calling on you to take immediate and concrete action to support the safety and viability of licensed child care programs in Ontario. Hundreds of thousands of Ontario families depend on the licensed child care system every day, but right now that system is in crisis. We need a provincial plan to make our young children's care as safe as possible and to prevent the collapse of the child care sector.

To keep children and families safe, the Ontario government must:

- Reinstatement eligibility for publicly-funded PCR tests to include children, families, Early Childhood Educators, child care providers and staff;
- Recommence COVID-19 case reporting in the child care sector;
- Increase financial support to licensed child care programs to ensure recruitment and retention of qualified staff;
- Provide 10 permanent paid sick days to support child care workers and families with mandatory isolation periods; and
- Take responsibility for the health and safety of families and workers by clearly guiding operators facing cohort dismissals due to positive COVID-19 test results in their programs.

While it has been encouraging to see recent announcements promising Rapid Antigen Tests, N95 masks and HEPA filters to child care programs, the provincial government needs to ensure that there is adequate and ongoing supply. Child care programs need:

- Enough Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) for all children, families, ECEs, child care providers and staff in their child care programs
- Adequate and ongoing supplies of high quality N95 masks, other necessary PPE; and
- Enough HEPA filters to ensure one per classroom and common area in each of Ontario's 5000+ child care programs.

In addition to these immediate actions to address pressing health and safety concerns, Ontario must ensure the long-term viability of the child care sector and affordable child care for families by:

- signing onto the federal child care plan; and
- following the child care community's Roadmap to Universal Child Care in Ontario.

The child care sector is experiencing a workforce crisis, plagued by underfunding which drives low wages and challenging working conditions. Educators deserve decent work and pay. Ontario families need affordable child care.

Safe, affordable, quality and accessible child care is vital to our province's well-being and to our social and economic recovery.

Signed,

Health experts and organizations

1. Dr. Ashleigh Tuite
2. Dr. Colin Furness
3. Dr. David Fisman
4. Dr. Naheed Dosani
5. Decent Work and Health Network

National and provincial organizations

6. Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario
7. Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

8. CUPE Ontario
9. Childcare Resource and Research Unit
10. Child Care Now (Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada)
11. Canadian Child Care Federation
12. Ontario Campaign 2000: End Child and Family Poverty
13. Justice for Workers: Decent work for All
14. Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
15. Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
16. Ontario Nonprofit Network
17. Workers' Action Centre
18. Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
19. Ontario Federation of Labour
20. Métis Nation Ontario
21. YWCA Ontario
22. Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Local child care programs and community organizations

23. Toronto Community for Better Child Care
24. Toronto Parents for Child Care
25. First Adventure Child Development Centre
26. RisingOaks Early Learning Ontario
27. Early Years Coalition Waterloo Region
28. YWCA Cambridge
29. Family Space
30. CUPE 503
31. Discovery Early Learning & Care
32. Central Hasting Early Education and Childcare
33. Oak Park Co-operative Children's Centre
34. Heritage Child Care & Early Learning
35. Creative Beginnings Childcare Centre
36. The Learning Enrichment Foundation
37. Toronto Caucus, Canadian Federation of University Women
38. Early Years Professionals RISE UP T.O.
39. Janet Davis, Former Toronto City Councillor
40. Seeds to Sprouts
41. Superior Children's Centre
42. York Humber Child Care Centre
43. CUPE 2484
44. St. Andrew Child Care Centre
45. Community Partners for Success
46. Perth Early Learning Centre
47. Stirling Cooperative Nursery School
48. Hamilton Umbrella Family and Child Centres
49. Brookhaven child Care Centre
50. Treetop Children's Centre
51. St. Lawrence Co-op Day Care Inc.
52. Compass Early Learning and Care
53. Ferncliff Daycare and Afterschool Group
54. Balmy Beach Community Daycare
55. Orde Day Care
56. The Neighbourhood Group
57. Sunny Faces Day Care Centre
58. Selwyn Community Childcare Centre
59. Centro Clinton Daycare

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Tags: advocacy ^[4]

health and safety ^[5]

wellbeing ^[6]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/22/01/urgent-action-needed-child-care-safety-and-viability-more-50-experts> [2] https://www.childcareontario.org/open_letter [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/advocacy> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health-and-safety> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/9119>