

Ontario is violating the early learning and child care agreement ^[1]

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Excerpt

Most child care in Ontario is provided by non-profit or public operators. This has been true for years. A full 70% of the licensed/regulated child care spaces for children 0-5 were non-profit or public back in 2022, when Ontario signed the Canada-Wide Agreement with Ottawa.

So, two things are not in doubt. First, it is obviously possible for non-profit and public child care services in Ontario to grow and expand, given the right conditions. They have done it successfully in the past, more successfully than the for-profit child care operators. Second, the Ontario government, with the support of municipal governments and school boards, knows exactly how to facilitate and co-ordinate the expansion of non-profit and public child care, because it has done this in the past.

So, if non-profit and public child care are not expanding rapidly in Ontario, it must have to do with the failures of Ontario government policy (as described in my recent blog post).

- Ontario has failed to fix shortages of early childhood educators. Starting wages in Ontario are \$5.00 an hour less than in P.E.I.!
- It has failed to provide or enable sources of capital funding for expansion of community non-profit child care.
- It has starved child care providers of revenue in the \$10 a day program and has failed to provide any certainty about future revenue streams for operators.
- Ontario has failed so comprehensively that you have to wonder if the failings are deliberate.

To cap it all off, we now find that Ontario is deliberately violating the terms of the Canada-Wide Agreement that it signed with the federal government back in March 2022. Ontario promised to increase child care capacity by at least 86,000 spaces, and it promised that a maximum of 30% of these new spaces would be operated by commercial for-profit operators. The balance would be community-based or school-based non-profit and public child care. It also promised that it would prioritize development of child care in underserved areas and amongst families with greater needs.

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