

# Give them an inch and they'll take a mile: The story of for-profit child care in Ontario <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

Access online <sup>[2]</sup>

## Excerpt

The Ministry of Education in Ontario is beginning to understand that they really can't satisfy for-profit child care providers with anything less than the full cake and eat it too. The Ontario government has bent over backwards to accommodate the for-profit child care operators; they want them to opt into the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system. What has the Ministry done so far for the for-profit operators?

- It changed the regulations so that municipalities (mandated to be Service System Managers) no longer have the discretion to sign purchase-of-service agreements only with not-for-profit providers (16 of the 47 had this type of provision);
- It changed regulations so that measurement of quality in a centre could not be used as a criterion for eligibility for CWELCC sign-up;
- It completely gutted the new Management and Funding Guidelines for 2022 which the Ministry itself had established back in April. The April version of the guidelines affirmed that municipalities should judge whether the funds given to operators in 2022 were based on actual costs. In other words, the municipalities should judge whether operators had ineligible expenditures or excessive profit claims. The August Guidelines eliminated these provisions.
- It ordered municipalities to collect very little financial data from operators. The April version of the Guidelines said that "CMSMs/DSSABs are required to collect sufficient and detailed financial information from Licensees.... CMSMs/DSSABs will review all financial components including cost and expense line items for reasonability and eligibility, while ensuring CWELCC System objectives will be achieved...." The August version of the Guidelines said "Information collected from Licensees to support implementation should be kept to the minimum amount necessary to meet the reporting requirements outlined in the CWELCC Guidelines...."

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