

Child care in transition: A case study on for-profit care owners in Nova Scotia ^[1]

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Abstract

In 2021, Nova Scotia was among the first Canadian provinces to sign onto the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement. Promising significant investments into reducing the costs of child care for Nova Scotian families, creating more child care spaces, and increasing wages for child care workers, the new agreement has been celebrated for its intent to improve the quality of and access to care. Yet, the policy faced pushback from for-profit child care owners in Nova Scotia, who expressed deep concerns about the impact of the policy on their centers. Recognizing this discord, this article explores how the transition to the new funding model has impacted for-profit care facilities in the province. Based on a series of interviews with for-profit owners/operators, this article examines the policy rollout and identifies three key areas of concern for for-profits regarding the transition to the CWELCCA: financial concerns; management concerns; and communication challenges with the provincial government. The findings suggest that for-profit owners in the province were particularly frustrated by a lack of consultation with stakeholders and a series of miscommunications throughout the process.

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