

Ontario coalition campaigning against 'big-box' child care. Group says 'It's time for public child care'

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EXCERPTS

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) has launched an important new campaign to raise public awareness of the threat that for-profit child care poses to children and families.

The theme is 'It's Time for Public Child Care' and the goal is to sound the warning about the dangers posed by "big box" for-profit operators attempting to buy up and take over child care operations in Ontario.

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) is pleased to support and work with the coalition on this initiative.

In August 2007, child care centres across the province got a letter asking, "Have you ever wondered what your child care centre is worth in today's market?"

"Unfortunately, the letter was not a joke," the coalition says.

"123 Busy Beavers is a recently incorporated Ontario company linked to the world's largest child care corporation, ABC Learning Centres in Australia, a company traded on the Australian stock exchange," the group says.

"During the past decade, corporate child care has taken over child care in Australia, and accessibility, quality and affordability have taken a back seat to corporate profits. We need to Stop 123 Busy Beavers - we need a moratorium on new licenses for commercial operators. The McGuinty Government can do this today!"

Legislation proposed:

Andrea Horwath, an NDP legislature member, has introduced Bill 26, a law ensuring that new child care licenses are restricted to not-for-profit operators while renewing licenses only for existing for-profit operators. Bill 26 would ensure that public money designated for child care goes to children, not profit, thereby making Ontario a less lucrative market for profit-motivated companies like 123 Busy Beavers.

In Ottawa, the NDP introduced a similar federal proposal - Bill C-303 - which is also aimed at the aggressive takeover drive now underway by 123 Busy Beavers.

The coalition is calling on the Ontario government to:

- Immediately introduce a moratorium on new licenses for commercial child care operators.

- Support Bill 26 to ensure that new child care licenses are restricted to not-for-profit child care providers. (Bill 26 may be debated as soon as March 6).

- Meet pay equity obligations to early childhood educators and child care workers to improve the living standards for workers who are often underpaid and undervalued.

- Fund a comprehensive, affordable early learning and child care system, modeled on Quebec's \$7-a-day early learning and child care system.

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- reprinted from NUPGE

Region: Ontario [2]

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/08/02/ontario-coalition-campaigning-against-big-box-child-care-group-says> [2]
<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856>