

Ontario raises bar on daycare [CA-ON] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Queen's Park is investing \$12 million to create the country's first regulatory College of Early Childhood Educators to ensure kids in daycare get high-quality care from well-trained professionals, Children's Minister Mary Anne Chambers said yesterday.

Just 40 per cent of Ontario child-care workers hold college or university degrees in early childhood education, a situation that is putting child-care quality at risk, a recent provincial study found. It recommended the province immediately invest in training and wages so that within eight years, all child-care workers have some post-secondary education in the field.

"The whole concept of the college is to raise the bar on quality," Chambers told reporters at Toronto's Rawlinson Child Care Centre. "This is going to be really good for early childhood education."

...

"This is an important milestone for the early childhood education field," said Eduarda Sousa, executive director of the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario, which has been lobbying for a regulatory college for 20 years.

...

Cash for the college was part of a larger child-care spending plan for \$142.5 million in previously announced federal and provincial funds. Almost \$106 million will sustain 7,374 newly created daycare spaces, including 300 spots for aboriginal kids living off-reserve.

About \$25 million will help boost wages by about 3 per cent for about 33,500 of the province's lowest-paid child-care workers whose salaries average about \$23,000.

Toronto's share of the money &em; about \$32.2 million &em; will help daycares pay increased rent and utility costs, raise wages and sustain 926 new spaces created this year.

Child-care advocates welcomed the new spending but said when barely 20 per cent of Ontario children have access to licensed daycare, much more is needed.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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