

Lack of day care should be a crime [CA-ON]^[1]

Editorial/Opinion

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EXCERPTS:

RE: '\$200m chop in child care' (Nov. 14), and 'Child-care system on alert after paper leaked' (Dec. 1).

In the fall of 1960, I was not quite four years old. Circumstances had forced my mother to go out to work. The only child care she was able to locate or afford was a neighbour. It seems like only yesterday that I was abandoned into that hell.

The woman's husband was a shift worker and slept during the day. The only words I recall coming from that woman's mouth were: "Be quiet and watch television." Thank God, I didn't have to spend my very earliest years there. And, thank God for Captain Kangaroo and The Friendly Giant. There was no story time or picture books, no blocks with which to build, no squishy paint for little masterpieces, no dress-up clothes or climbers to play on. No meaningful conversations. I fell asleep on the couch in front of that television every afternoon, no back rub on a cosy cot and warm blanket with soft lullabies.

There was no kindergarten in British Columbia back then, so I had to wait until I was six to go to school. To finally be able to go to school was one of the most exciting and wonderful times in my childhood.

Now, here's the important message: Our provincial government is reportedly considering drastic cuts to our current regulated early-childhood education system. The effect would be further deterioration of a system that is already inadequate.

I'm certain that, as I write this, there are children enduring the poor quality babysitting that I suffered -- and that should be a crime. We don't have nearly enough subsidized child care, and this government appears willing to eliminate what we do have. We are the only province in Canada which has not spent a dime of the \$117 million in federal money allocated for regulated early-childhood education.

Please, I urge every citizen to put our smallest and most vulnerable people first. Write, call your MPP, sign a petition. We must take this very seriously.

With all we know about the vitally important early years, our very future is at stake.

-- Rebecca Stirling, Hamilton.

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Region: Ontario^[2]

Tags: funding^[3]

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