

University of Toronto Mississauga closes Early Learning Centre ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

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After only eight months of operation and three years of student subsidy, the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) has announced that it will be closing the doors of the Early Learning Centre - the campus' only onsite child care.

"Students have been fighting for an Early Learning Centre for more than 6 years on our campus. It is stunning to me that the university would turn its back on student parents at a time when the economy is lagging and unemployment is so high," said Vickita Bhatt, Vice-President Equity of the University of Toronto at Mississauga Students' Union. "Campus child care helps to open up educational opportunities for many who are struggling in this economy and it would be shameful for UTM to return to being a campus without any support for student parents."

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This week, the University contacted the parents of the UTM Early Learning Centre to inform them that the Centre would be shut down at the end of June and no support services would be offered in the upcoming year. This decision came as a surprise to UTM students, who voted three years ago to charge a levy to every student to support the Centre, and who have increased the levy by over 300% since then. This year, the University demanded an increase in the per full time student levy from \$7.92 a year to \$18.03. When student leaders objected to the increase, UTM Principal Ian Orchard declared campus childcare "a failed experiment" and the centre's unionized staff received their termination notice.

"Students have accepted the levy increases because they support campus child care, but the Administration is shirking its responsibility in ensuring that affordable child care is available," said Danielle Sandhu, Vice-President Campus Life of the University of Toronto Students' Union. "The answer is not a 128% levy increase for students, but a commitment from the Administration to ensure access to education for students with families."

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- reprinted from the Canadian News Wire

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: funding ^[3]

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<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/availability>