

PEI leadership on childcare an example for others, says CUPE ^[1]

Author: PR-Canada.net

Source: PR-Canada.net

Format: Article

Publication Date: 9 Jun 2010

AVAILABILITY
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EXCERPTS

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) says the government of Prince Edward Island is to be congratulated for showing leadership with its new Preschool Excellence Initiative.

"Premier Ghiz and his government have embraced the need to guarantee a quality system of Early Childhood Learning and Care (ECEC) that is accessible and sustainable-something we've long advocated for. The initiative means that public funding for for-profit centres will end," said CUPE National President Paul Moist. "P.E.I. is taking leadership and setting an example for other provinces and the federal government."

The initiative is to provide quality care to all of the Island's children aged four and under. Quality care will come from a system that ensures access, a standard play-based curriculum, qualified early childhood education workers that have decent pay and benefits, and parent involvement. P.E.I. will open 20 early learning centres for September 2010 and 20 more in 2011.

"This initiative is important for children's development, for families, and for the future of our communities," said Shawna Quinn, who represents P.E.I. on CUPE's National Child Care Working Group. "It'll be a boost for workers in the sector and help the economy, too."

P.E.I. is the first province to implement an ECEC system for preschool children. The new system begins September 2010.

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