

# Profit-driven care cannot be child-centred care <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS:

Children's well-being is priceless and costly. That's why there's no place for profit in daycare. And it's also why this Globe and Mail story from last fall should serve as a warning to Canadians who care about children and families, culture and community:

Before [the Edleun daycare chain] can attempt to consolidate an industry traditionally managed by the state, the company must dispel the perception it is looking to profit at the expense of children. Unlike most Western countries, about 80 per cent of Canada's child-care centres are not-for-profit. And in Ontario, funding regulations in several large municipalities restrict how much money can go to privately owned centres.

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If Canada fails to support families by providing a fair and democratic child care system for all families and children, private corporations seeking to maximize profits will fill the gaps left open by government inaction. Edleun is one of many corporate chains that want to convert the high value of child care into cold hard cash. Instead of letting the likes of Edleun take over child care in Canada, we should be creating a system that supports children and families, one that maximizes public benefits instead of private gains. There is simply no room in child care for profits. There is no way for corporate culture to create a system centred on the common good. Child care is much more than a service, as it is at the heart of cultural and community life.

Everyone in Canada benefits when families are supported. Benefiting everyone by serving the common good is much more of a mandate than any corporation could manage to do at all, especially while making a profit. Unless we gave corporations the power to raise public monies and we, the public, elected their boards of directors, it's simply too much to expect corporations to manage such a culturally essential and complex task as providing universal child care supports for the common good of all children and all families. We already elect a Parliament and Legislative Assemblies, so there's no need to hand culturally essential jobs that should be done in the public interest to corporations. The government alone is accountable to the public as a whole. The government alone can raise and distribute resources based on fairness and equity.

Quality child care costs more than corporate advertising, which puts not-for-profit or small operators providing quality child care at a huge disadvantage when facing off with marketing mavens seeking to hide the true aim of profit-driven daycare. Child care is too valuable and too important to be run by CEOs, accountants and advertising executives. If we go this route, Canada's child care system would mirror the health care system in the United States. Profits at patient expense is a common place equation in the United States. With corporate controlled daycare, profit would come before children and families.

Below is a Globe and Mail report on one Alberta corporation's plan to expand corporate control of daycare - to a level that is ten times today's numbers. This is a nightmare scenario, speaking to the urgent need for leadership to get public, universal and community-based daycare for all children and families in Canada. We need a people-driven system of child care, or we'll end up being stuck with a profit-driven one instead.

"Canada is full of mom-and-pop shops and companies set up by a couple of real estate buddies," said Mr. Wulf, chief executive officer of Calgary-based Edleun Group Inc. "It's not going to be like that any more. It's hugely capital intensive and you need economies of scale to operate effectively. "

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-reprinted from Tom Kertes

**Region:** Alberta <sup>[3]</sup>

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