

# Toronto municipal child care's long history <sup>[1]</sup>



Know Thy History: Looking Back on Child Care

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Excerpts from Friendly, M. (1994). *Child care policy in Canada; Putting the pieces together*. Toronto: Addison-Wesley. pp. 129-132.:

World War II marked the beginning of a new era for child care in Canada. The Dominion-Provincial War Time Agreement made 50% cost sharing available to the provinces to support child care programs for children whose mothers were working in essential wartime industries. Only Ontario and Quebec took advantage of the federal cost sharing. A number of centres opened across Ontario but the majority were in Toronto.

In Toronto the municipal government operated most programs for preschool children while school boards were responsible for child care for older children. This participation of local government in the operation of child care programs was the first substantial publicly operated child care in Canada and was to play a significant role in future development of child care in Ontario.

- Wartime day nurseries are boon to mothers working in industry <sup>[2]</sup>, Montreal Gazette, January 28, 1944
- Day care during wartime <sup>[3]</sup>, CBC News Archives

At the end of World War II the federal government rescinded the wartime cost sharing agreement and federal funding for child care in Ontario. The provincial government announced that all of their wartime day nurseries were to be closed. A Toronto group, the Day Nursery and Day Care Parents' Association was established to oppose this move. This was the first major child care advocacy effort in Canada. The Parents' Association was supported by welfare groups, women's organizations, home and school associations and the Toronto Medical Officer of Health. The group held protest marches to Queen's Park, organized a letter writing campaign and did extensive lobbying of politicians.

- Protest closure of day nurseries <sup>[4]</sup>, Toronto Daily Star, November 19, 1945=

The public campaign was victorious and a number of the child care centres remained open or were reopened. In conjunction with this effort was the passage of Canada's first provincial legislation and regulations specifically intended for child care, The Day Nurseries Act.

- Ontario government supervises nurseries <sup>[5]</sup>, Leader-Post, June 2, 1948

## Further reading:

- Public child care profile: Toronto, Ontario <sup>[6]</sup>, Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2009.
- Theorizing political difference in Toronto's postwar child care movement <sup>[7]</sup>, Susan Prentice, 1996. CRRU Occasional Paper 8.

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[8]</sup>

**Tags:** privatization <sup>[9]</sup>

federal programs <sup>[10]</sup>

public management <sup>[11]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/11/toronto-municipal-child-care%E2%80%99s-long-history> <sup>[2]</sup>

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=G78tAAAAIAJ&sjid=opgFAAAIAJ&dq=wartime-day-nurseries%20municipal&pg=6297%2C4028411> [3] <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/society/family/who-cares-for-our-kids-the-changing-face-of-daycare-in-canada/day-care-during-wartime.html> [4] <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=GZY6AAAAIAJ&sjid=RCoMAAAIAJ&dq=wartime-day-nurseries%20protest&pg=4063%2C7883099> [5] <http://news.google.com/newspapers?id=EuhTAAAAIAJ&sjid=6jgNAAAAIAJ&dq=ontario%20wartime%20day%20nurseries&pg=944%2C138353> [6] [https://archive.cupe.ca/updir/Public\\_profile\\_Toronto.pdf](https://archive.cupe.ca/updir/Public_profile_Toronto.pdf) [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/publications/occasional-paper-series/96/02/theorizing-political-difference-toronto%E2%80%99s-postwar-child-c> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/privatization> [10] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs> [11] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8166>