

Education minister defends province's child-care spending after Mammoliti complaint ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

This week, Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti demanded the McGuinty government step in with \$123-million in funding to avoid a child-care crisis in Toronto. He blamed provincial subsidies that have not kept pace with inflation, plus an all-day kindergarten program that forces daycares to retrofit their centres to cater to younger children, for the incoming financial problems. In a statement to the National Post, Ontario's Education Minister fired back, urging Councillor Mammoliti to recognize how much money the provincial has poured into child care.

Excerpted statement from Ontario Minister of Education Laurel Broten:

"The Ontario government takes our responsibility to Ontario's kids and families very seriously. We are the government that stepped in when the federal government stepped away from their child-care responsibilities with \$63.5M to permanently fill the federal child-care funding gap. Since 2003, this government has increased child-care funding province-wide from \$532.4-million to \$869-million - a 63% increase. In Toronto, the increase in funding is 50% - up from \$174.5M in 2003 to \$262M in 2011.

Through our investments, nearly 43,000 more children are receiving fee subsidies every year. We have expanded full fee subsidy eligibility to families earning under \$20,000. This makes it possible for more low-income working parents to have access to affordable, high-quality child-care and play an active role in the labour force. We have also created more than 22,000 new licensed non-profit child care spaces in the last four years alone.

Now, we're bringing full-day kindergarten to Ontario - we've already invested over \$450-million to support the expansion of full-day kindergarten and that investment will continue to grow. Full-day kindergarten is best for our kids and it's saving families money: by full implementation in 2014, families with 4-and-5 years in full-day kindergarten will no longer be paying for child care - instead they could be saving up to \$6,500 a year.

But with this kind of transformative change in early learning, we know that the rest of the system will need to change too. That is why we are providing an additional \$51-million in funding to child-care centres -phased in over the next few years to help in this transition. We are also providing \$12-million over 5 years to help non-profit child care centres make retrofits and renovations to serve younger children."

-reprinted from the National Post

Region: Ontario ^[2]

Tags: funding ^[3]

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