

Public day care is best^[1]

Letter to the editor

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EXCERPTS:

Child care has changed. Child care research has not. As a public policy researcher and as a former senior policy analyst with the Ontario government, I have seen that over 30 years of research demonstrate that quality child care, now rightfully referred to as "early education," can best be delivered in the public and/or non-profit sectors.

The Waterloo District School Board is well positioned to deliver high quality early education (and care). Many third-party providers are not.

The 30 years of research also tells us that quality is not likely to be found in for-profit operations. I feel no pain for third-party for-profit child care providers.

As for community-based, non-profit child care, nothing has really changed. Parents have always scrambled to fit their children's day together with their work/study day. Parents who have children of different ages (infants, preschoolers and school-age) know this shuffle well. And while the highest quality child care can be delivered in community-based, non-profit settings, it does not mean that it is. Some community-based, non-profit child care is high quality, but most of it, again citing the research, is not. See for example, *"The benefits and costs of good child care: The economic rationale for public investment in young children"* by economists Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky, University of Toronto, 1998.

Establishing a seamless day of early childhood education and care started a long time ago. It may be painful in the short-term, but we need to take a long view to the optimal outcome of a universal, publicly funded and regulated system for all our children and families. Advocates, researchers, and academics have been listening to parents and working to create such a system in Canada for 30 years.

The Waterloo District School Board is doing the right thing. I applaud them.

Region: Canada^[2]

Tags: public management^[3]

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