

The pursuit of profit in Ontario child care: Risky business for parents and government ^[1]

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Report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts:

In December 2011, child care in Ontario entered a new era with the announcement that Edleun (EDucation LEarning UNiverse) Group, Canada's first publicly-traded child care corporation, had bought seven Ontario centres. While Ontario has had smaller-scale for-profit child care for many years, the advent of this publicly traded profit corporation creates a new and risky environment for Ontario child care. Having raised substantial funds from big investors and begun its operations in Alberta and BC, Edleun now has the capacity to garner a significant share of the child care "market" across Ontario to help meet its goal of owning 10% of Canadian child care.

Ontario child care is particularly vulnerable to for-profit expansion at this time, especially to large-scale operations with cash. Ontario is experiencing a profound child care crisis as the historically shaky viability of many centres due to a history of weak policy formation and inadequate public investment has been tipped into crisis as full-day kindergarten has been introduced. This has created a situation that to entrepreneurs like Edleun's officials represents what they view as an opportunity-to buy out centres and smaller chains whose owners fear that the funding and policy uncertainty may drive them out. According to the *Globe and Mail*: "Owners are finding themselves increasingly squeezed as costs rise. In Ontario, all-day kindergarten has reduced demand and cashstrapped cities have considered scrapping subsidies. That makes selling an attractive option, and Edleun said it's had no trouble finding sellers."

Ironically, the corporatization of Ontario child care has moved to the front burner just as the Ontario government has moved child care under the mandate of the Ministry of Education as the first stage of "Learning in Ontario."

Related link: **ISSUE FILE:** Recent expansion of corporate child care in Canada ^[3]

Region: Ontario ^[4]

Tags: privatization ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/03/pursuit-profit-ontario-child-care-risky-business-parents>

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