

Child care in Ontario: A call for transformation, not tinkering ^[1]

A response to Modernizing child care in Ontario

Author: CUPE Ontario

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AVAILABILITY

Full document in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts:

We take note of the discussion paper's caveat that "strengthening the child care sector will be challenging in a climate of fiscal restraint" and further that "over the next three years, the process of modernization will not be about expanding the current system". We remind the Ontario government of the evidence, based on economic analyses conducted by prominent economists such as Robert Fairholm and Pierre Fortin that show child care to be an economic asset, not a drain, on the economy. Fairholm's research shows that every dollar invested in high quality childcare brings a \$2.42 return in short- and long-term benefits to Ontario, including educational benefits as well as increased earnings, employment and reduced social costs. Montreal-based Fortin shows how Quebec's child care funding more than pays for itself through increased tax dollars on mothers' income and consumption taxes; he calculates that Quebec recoups \$1.05 (with the federal government gaining \$.44 on the dollar) for each public dollar spent on child care by Quebec. Well-directed public spending on child care is a public investment, not a public cost and part of the solution to Ontario's economic challenges, not part of the problem.

We suggest that "climate of fiscal restraint" or not, the Ontario government is severely under-funding regulated child care, whether this is considered comparatively using international benchmarks or domestically, when compared to the other provinces and territories.

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We interpret "putting children and families first" to mean that -given the current circumstances, the Ontario government needs to act much more quickly, decisively, and with a more coherent approach than the discussion paper outlines. We observe that the state of child care in Ontario is at an all-time crisis point.

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The Ontario child care situation is getting worse, not better. Since last winter, closures of non profit and municipal centres and growing subsidy waiting lists have intensified, and have been recorded in Windsor, Kenora, Peel, Toronto, Niagara, Ottawa, Hamilton, and others. The closure of public and non profit child care is but one of three structural shifts that are occurring in Ontario child care without the protection of a provincial plan or policy, with limited transitional support and intervention from the provincial government and shrinking community resources

These shifts-which, we contend, are likely to be un-alterable in Ontario as they have been elsewhere-may be described as: closure, and shrinking supply of Ontario's best child care options; disproportionate expansion in the for-profit sector and growth of home-grown profit-making chains; and entry of rapid growth, big-box child care corporations for the first time.

Region: Ontario ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/09/child-care-ontario-call-transformation-not-tinkering>

Links

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