

# Education is not about bottom lines <sup>[1]</sup>

Letter

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## AVAILABILITY

Read online <sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

The City of Greater Sudbury, in its wisdom, has decided to close Junior Citizens Day Care Centre.

The reason cited - staff are paid 50-per-cent more than early childhood educators (ECEs) who work in non-profit child care centres. The ECEs who work at Junior Citizens are not overpaid; those who work in the non-profit centres are underpaid.

Some history - in a survey of workers' wages who have equivalent work duties and qualifications, it was found that zookeepers and parking lot attendants are paid more than ECEs.

What is this saying about us as a society and what is valued? How much a job pays reflects how a job is valued, and the fact that ECEs are underpaid means taking care of animals and cars is worth more than taking care of children.

During the days of pay equity, it was recognized that ECEs were underpaid and the process was started to bring the wages of those who worked in the non-profit sector up to the level of those who worked for the city-run centres.

Although it was going to take a long time to achieve pay equity, it was still an action plan to address the issue of underpaying those workers who care for our children while parents are away at school or work.

The child care centre run by Cambrian College also paid its workers equivalent wages to the CGS's Junior Citizens. Both of these child care centres provided unionized, jobs to its workers. Incidentally, Cambrian's child care centre closed several years ago and the same reason was cited - wages were too high.

Conclusion, the institutions that actually paid ECEs what they are worth are closed or will be closed soon enough.

Good wages equals high-quality child care. High-quality child care is linked to children's success in school, the work force and in overall better health and happiness. Good wages are linked to employee retention, job satisfaction and other benefits.

Wouldn't you want your children taken care of by well-trained educators who are paid a fair wage, are happy with their jobs and who plan to stay on working with your child?

I refer readers to a Canadian report, "The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care," by Gordon Cleveland and Michael Krashinsky, Department of Economics, University of Toronto, March 1998.

It concludes that for every dollar spent on such a program, approximately \$2 worth of benefits are generated for children and their parents. I urge city councillors to take a long hard look at the facts about child care and to keep operating Junior Citizens Day Care Centre.

Sometimes it not always about the bottom line.

-reprinted from Northern Life

**Region:** Ontario <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** funding <sup>[4]</sup>

spaces <sup>[5]</sup>

demand <sup>[6]</sup>

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