

# The faces of Canada's child care workers in seven photos <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Monsebraaten, Laurie

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## AVAILABILITY

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

## EXCERPTS

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They are the unsung heroes of the tiny tot brigade: the women (and some men) who cuddle, coach and care for our community's youngest children while parents work or study. In the lead-up to Ontario's 15th annual child care worker and early childhood educator appreciation day on Oct. 8, Toronto photographer Joel Andrew Clifton has captured the essence of the craft in Portraits of Child Care. The photo exhibit, organized by Viktoria Bitto and supported by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, opens at the Daniels Spectrum Oct. 3.

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### Nutrition

Nutrition and health are vital to children's development — but meal times should also be social and filled with joy. By creating a relaxed and natural routine of hygiene and snack time, child care workers help toddlers at Bruce/WoodGreen Early Learning Centre at Bruce Public School, enjoy food, conversation and laughs while maintaining a healthy body and mind.

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### Exploration

Toddlers are always on the go, questioning, exploring and figuring things out. Alana Marie Powell, a Registered Early Childhood Educator, captivates a group of toddlers with a story as other staff prepare lunch at Pat Shultz Child Care Centre on Danforth Ave.

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### Expression

Encouraging children to express themselves through co-operative outdoor play fosters self-esteem and positive socialization. Girls in the school-age program at the Fashion District Child Care at Ryerson Public School, showcase their latest gymnastic and dance routines.

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### Support

Fostering a supportive, encouraging and creative environment in school-age programming, builds self-esteem and self-directed learning. A boy at the Fashion District Child Care uses art to describe the different birds he sees in the neighbourhood.

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### Trust

Mutual respect and trust are key to the special bond child care workers build with children. It allows children to communicate with ease, share their hopes and needs and know that their opinions matter. A school-age girl and child care worker at Fashion District Child Care share a tender moment.

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### Life skills

Scrap paper and kitchen utensils promote everyday life skills like cooking. Solitary play helps children build self-regulation and discover new interests. A boy in the school-age program at Fashion District Child Care prepares a pretend meal for his classmates.

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## Friendships

Children in daycare build enduring friendships through play. Two boys in the school-age program at the Fashion District Child Care can't stop laughing and questioning each other while creating spaceships out of Lego.

## Daycare workers by the numbers

- \$17.47 - the average hourly wage of a child care worker in Ontario, or about \$36,000 a year
- 56,000 - Early Childhood Educators are registered with Ontario's College of Early Childhood Educators
- 47 - Percentage of Ontario child care centre staff with a pension plan or RRSP
- 77 - Percentage of Ontario child care centre staff with paid sick or personal leave days
- 59 - Percentage of Ontario child care centre staff with medical benefits
- 59 - Percentage of child care workers in Canada with a two-year diploma in early childhood education
- 96 - Percentage of child care workers in Canada who are women

-reprinted from the Toronto Star

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

**Tags:** childcare workforce <sup>[4]</sup>

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