



Canadian Federation of University Women  
**ONTARIO COUNCIL**



**Comments on:**

**Child Care Modernization  
Early Learning Division  
Ministry of Education**

**September 2012**

By the

**Ontario Council  
Canadian Federation of University Women**

Submitted by  
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Child Care Issues, CFUW Ontario Council**

Hon. Laurel Broten  
Child Care Modernization  
c/o Early Learning Division  
Ministry of Education  
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Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1L2

*Re: Modernizing Child Care in Ontario: Sharing Conversations, Strengthening Partnerships.*

The Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Ministry of Education concerning the “modernization” of child care in the Province of Ontario.

The 5,500 members of CFUW Ontario Council in 55 communities in all the regions of Ontario have made child care an important priority.

In 1978 CFUW established an important policy:

***Child Care - Increased Financial Support***

*RESOLVED, That the Canadian Federation of University Women urge provincial and territorial governments to ensure increased financial support for quality day care, including day care for infants, private home day care, lunch and after-school programs, as well as licensed day care centres.*

We commend the government of Ontario for addressing the continuing changes in child care in Ontario and placing our families and children at the forefront of long term planning for the future of our Province.

Since the inception of the Day Nurseries Act in 1946, child care in Ontario has taken a dramatic and different role in the life of the average Ontario family in 2012. In the past three decades we have experienced an upward trend in women being employed; 68% of mothers whose youngest child is under age three is in the workplace.

We understand how important it is for our children to receive quality care and early learning during their years of development. Children who receive a good start in life are healthier, happier and are open to future opportunities such as continued education and employment. Therefore, we have healthier communities with less stress on our social programs and hospitals.

As outlined in Charles Pascal's report, *With Our Best Future in Mind*, a vision of building a high-quality, accessible child care system in Ontario is viewed as priority to this government.

However, since the Province introduced All Day Learning for 4 & 5 year olds in a select number of schools in Ontario over the past few years as recommended in Pascal's report, child care centres and young families have experienced a disconnect of services.

Families who have children under four are still experiencing lack of space, underfunding, and lack of subsidies because child care centres cannot afford to transition to the needs of the 0 – 3 year olds who require more care and equipment.

In his report, Pascal recommended funding this transition. The budget for 2012 – 2013 is \$90 million dollars. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care states that the child care sector views \$287 million per year is what is needed to stabilize the sector.

In Ontario 4 out of 5 children do not have a regulated child care space despite the 40,000 spaces that have recently been added. This is not enough and will continue to lag behind in the coming years if the government does not address the funding formula.

Families with compromised resources and low paying employment are particularly vulnerable to the inadequate funding and space in licensed day cares. Already under financial stress they cannot afford the fees and may consider unemployment as an alternative to finding affordable day care. The consequences of this are: the family declines to poverty and the day care centre cannot survive because of the number of vacancies, plus the child does not receive the skills they need for school.

Without adequate space and affordability, we are concerned that families under pressure to place their children in a licensed day care are turning to alternative ways to have their children cared for while they work.

Families as an alternative may turn to a licensed private-home daycare agency that complies with the Day Nurseries Act, or they may turn to an unlicensed child care provider who is not inspected by a third party to ensure they have met provincial standards for care.

Unregulated day care providers are able to work according to their own rules. Children may be at risk of being in the care of someone who is caring for more than five children, being in the care of someone other than the intended care giver or a person who does not have a police screening that is required in a licensed day care. All of these points leave our children in a vulnerable position and at risk.

For CFUW, this is not the desired alternative to affordable, quality day care.

In Ontario we need to have an equitable, quality and affordable system that addresses the diversities of our population including First Nation.

### **Recommendations for the key areas of action over the next three years:**

#### **Funding:**

- The Government for sound economic reasons should place a priority on transitional funding for child care centres.
  - ✓ Every licensed child care centre in Ontario should present a full budget on their transitional costs for the addition of equipment, and retrofitting spaces to accommodate infants.
- The Government should provide funding to ensure Early Childhood Education (ECE's) receive the same remuneration at a child care centre as they would receive working for a school board.
  - ✓ Child care centres do not have to compete with school boards for trained staff.
- As part of the Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy introduced in 2008, high quality, low cost child care should be a priority for low income families.
  - ✓ This ensures parents remain employed.
  - ✓ Children receive the quality care they need for future success in school.
  - ✓ Families are happy and healthier; leading to healthier, economically stronger communities.
  - ✓ Child care centres in low income neighbourhoods receive the funding they need to remain open.

#### **Community Partnerships**

- As 45% of Ontario's child care centres are either added onto a school or incorporated inside the school building they should be treated as an equal part of the learning environment.
  - ✓ School Boards need to work at communication.
  - ✓ Need to have adequate room to expand to accommodate more children.
  - ✓ A percentage of elementary schools in a district should have a child care centre.

- As recommend by Dr. Charles Pascal community partnerships should be formed to create better access to parenting resources.
  - ✓ Community care workers are able to identify learning problems before the child enters school.

### **Corporation and Small Business Partnerships**

- Large corporations and small businesses should be encouraged and receive tax incentives to provide licensed child care services within their space.
  - ✓ This would relieve stress on employees as they would be able to visit their small children during the day.
  - ✓ Encourage a better bond between parent and child.
  - ✓ Businesses receive some incentive for providing the space.
  - ✓ Staffs are fully trained and regulated. They receive 20% in wage subsidy from the government.

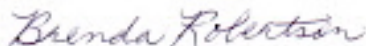
CFUW Ontario Council is committed to monitoring the progress of the revitalization of child care in Ontario through the *Child Care Modernization* initiative. We strongly believe that the only way we can remain economically viable is to create a child care system that is inclusive, affordable, and meets the needs of all families in our diverse province.

If we do not look after our children in their formative years, we have missed an opportunity for our future.

### **CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL:**

The Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women is composed of 55 clubs comprised of graduates living in urban and rural areas across Ontario. We are non-partisan, non-sectarian and we are totally member funded. Our members are active in public affairs, advocating on public education, justice, health and environmental issues as well as the status of women and human rights. Ontario Council is part of the Canadian Federation of University Women and has links to the International Federation of University Women.

Respectfully submitted,



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Child Care Modernization  
Response by CFUW Ontario Council  
September 14, 2012