



The Hon. Dwight Duncan, MPP Windsor-Tecumseh,
Minister of Finance
dduncan.mpp@liberal.ola.org

March 8, 2009

Re: Need for investment in child care in 2009 Ontario budget

Dear Minister Duncan:

Today as we celebrate International Women's Day, we bring to you our **concern about child care**.

We applaud the Ontario Government's goal to reduce the rates of child poverty by 25% in the next 5 years; however, we respectfully submit that a central part of the plan needs to be an affordable and accessible system of child care. It is one of the cornerstones of our economy - allowing parents to work, or further their education, at the same time providing valuable early learning which will support and develop minds for years to come. To quote Richard Florida and Roger Martin "early childhood development is key to the full development of human capabilities and talents."¹

CFUW Ontario Council has partnered with the Ontario Campaign 2000, because of the extensive research they have already done in this area. We have also endorsed the recommendations for early learning and child care as outlined by The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction in their recently published document entitled, *A Blueprint for Economic Stimulus and Poverty Reduction in Ontario*.

- Fully fund and meet deadlines for implementing full day learning for four-and-five-year-olds
- Create 7,500 new affordable child care spaces in the not-for-profit sector
- Save 22,000 child care spaces, which are threatened by expired Federal funds
- Increase the average wage of child care staff
- Invest \$200 million for operating funds and \$85 million for capital in 2009.

Quebec's investment in child care has been a key initiative that has helped bring about a 50% drop in their child poverty rates in 10 years, and the labour force participation of women in that province is now at historic highs. Simply put, access to affordable child care is a proven factor in helping to reduce the rates of child poverty.

Actions taken in the 2009 Ontario budget will mean the difference between a brief recession and a long-term economic crisis. Investing in child care is part of the solution.

CFUW Ontario Council, with 57 clubs across Ontario, is non-partisan, non-sectarian and member funded, part of the National and International Federation of University Women.

Sincerely,

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¹ Roger Martin and Richard Florida, *Ontario in the Creative Age*, Martin Prosperity Institute University of Toronto, p.34