

## CHILD CARE IN ONTARIO



[Quality early learning and child care](#) (ELCC) is beneficial to young children developmentally, academically and socially. Child care in Ontario has failed families due to high costs and low availability. The Covid-19 pandemic has further eroded child care in Ontario with [many centres closing](#). This, plus lockdowns, have forced [women out of the workforce](#).

### What are the issues?

- Low wages, no benefits, poor working conditions for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs)
- Staffing instabilities
- High costs for families
- Lack of spaces
- Childcare sites with flexible hours and those located in rural centres are few
- Higher ratios of children to staff
- Centers closing due to staffing issues, and the inability to hire qualified staff

The pandemic has highlighted the frailty of the child care sector in Ontario. The high costs and lack of quality spaces for working families has created a barrier for both parents to work outside of the home.

### Why now?

Child care in Ontario is at a crisis point. At the time of this writing, \$10.2 billion from the Federal Government as part of the [Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Plan](#) is still being negotiated. A good deal for Ontario needs to be sustainable and create more spaces for ALL Ontario families, urban and rural. All services should be funded sufficiently to provide high quality, accessible and affordable child care. ECEs should be compensated through wages, benefits, and education opportunities to prevent the loss of staff to higher paying jobs.

When fees are set as a matter of public policy along with substantial operational funding, this not only helps affordability, but also allows operators to pay higher salaries to staff. It helps to reduce staff turnover, and with it improves quality.

The federal-provincial plan calls for \$10.00/day or \$220. per month. If Ontario women were to participate in the workforce at the same rate as Quebec's, [Ontario's economy would benefit from 150,000 more workers](#).

### Resources

Child Care Now <https://www.timeforchildcare.ca>

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care <https://www.childcareontario.org/>

### EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE Key Message

Research has shown that affordable, quality early learning and child care (ELCC) is good for children and families, by enhancing child development and increasing employment participation.

Staffing issues such as low wages, no benefits, poor working conditions are at a crisis level, highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Child care spaces cannot be expanded if qualified staff and ECEs cannot be hired or retained.

"The real missing piece' to economic recovery is childcare": Economist Armine Yalnizyan

### Questions for Candidates

1. What will your party do to expand child care spaces, improve wages, benefits and working conditions for ECE's and staff?
2. Will your party commit to funding and put working families first, by providing quality, affordable child care where all children are nurtured and receive the developmental education they require?
3. Will your party sign onto the National Child Care plan as proposed by the Federal Government?