

CFUW Ontario Council Post Standing Committee Meeting--Education

March 25, 2017

Speaker: Shannon Fuller

Topic: Early Learning and Childcare

Shannon Fuller, the acting Assistant Deputy Minister in the Early Years Division at the Ministry of Education presented Renewing and Expanding Ontario's Early Years System in her plenary address at the March Ontario Council Standing Committee meeting. Shannon began with an overview of the Ontario's Early Years system within a historical perspective in 2009, Dr. Charles Pascal released *With Our Best Future in Mind*, with recommendations for a more integrated early learning and child care system, including full day kindergarten. In 2015, the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA) came into force, replacing 70 year old legislation. CCEYA strengthened compliance with programming through play based learning, and regulated health and safety in early years settings.



In August 2016, Associate Minister of Education Indira Naidoo-Harris (Early Years and Child Care) was appointed to work with Education Minister Mitzie Hunter; in the fall an additional 100,000 child care spaces were announced within a five year plan. Recent legislation has addressed support systems, licensing, access to affordable full day and before and after school care, fair wages for child care workers, and removing wait list charges. Expansion of daycare to ages 6 to 12 is underway. Ontario is developing an integrated early years program by amalgamating four services: Early Years Centres, Parenting and Family Literacy Centres, Child Care Resource Centres and Better Beginnings into Better Futures into *Ontario Early Years Child and Family Centres*.

The afternoon smaller group discussion session, led by the team from the Ministry, focussed on the three areas identified by the brief submitted by Ontario Council: Access, Quality and Funding. Our feedback was collected by Shannon for use by the Ministry as they continue to engage with partners and stakeholders to develop the Renewed Early Years and Childcare Policy Framework and Expansion Strategy.

Kathy Wosnick

Education Committee Chair
CFUW Ontario Council