



EARLY LEARNING & CHILD CARE in ONTARIO

Updated January 2020

The Issue

The continuing and continual push for quality, affordable child care and early learning, including full-day kindergarten.

Concerns:

Best expressed by Ontario's Financial Accountability Office:

"Ontario's relatively high child care costs contribute to the province's relatively low rate of child care usage. Only 40 per cent of Ontario children below the age of six participate in child care, the second lowest rate in the country. Low child care usage is closely associated with lower female labour force participation because mothers are often forced to limit their working hours or take time off to care for their children. **In 2018, the participation rate for core-age Ontario women, at 81.5 per cent, was the lowest in the country.**"¹

While the province has committed to continuing full-day kindergarten², there are concerns about changes in quality and staffing.

CFUW position:

CFUW Ontario Council's position: "the creation of a quality, universally accessible and comprehensive early learning and child care program which emphasizes the development of the whole child." that is

- "accessible and affordable to Ontario families no matter what their income, employment status or where they live and work;
- comprehensive and flexible enough to meet their families' needs;
- developed with parent and community participation to meet the social; physical, language and intellectual needs of their children in a caring and safe environment;
- developed to ensure optimal use of public funds and public accountability.
- funding for this should involve all levels of government through cost-sharing mechanisms, as in other human services such as health, education and social programs."

What is full-day kindergarten in Ontario?

This is a two part program for 4 and 5 year-olds, for both junior and senior kindergarten. The first is a play-based learning kindergarten program, following the province's curriculum for early years, with one certified teacher and one registered early childhood educator; the second is before- and after-school programs for full-day kindergarten students at schools where there is interest from families of at least 20 children. This part can be provided either by the school board or by a third-party operator, for example the Y. The aim is to provide a seamless learning experience for the children. Current studies are showing that full-day kindergarten is successful, with reading, writing and number knowledge than those who went to half-day, and with these children more likely to reach provincial academic standards in Grade 3.³

Action:

- Write to your MPP asking for their support, impress upon them the need for affordable, quality child care, and full-day kindergarten. Current studies show that full-day kindergarten is successful.
- Meet with local Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) to learn more about the pressures to child care.
- Monitor school boards.
- Network with other interested groups.
- Support CFUW's Grandparents for Child Care campaign <https://gpfcc.ca/>
- Survey your club members. How many grandmothers are doing child care?

¹ Financial Accountability Office Ontario Child Care In Ontario: A Review Of Ontario's New Child Care Tax Credit And Implications For Ontario's Labour Force, Sept. 24, 2019 <https://www.fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/childcare-ontario-2019>

² Kristin Rushowy, Full-day kindergarten is here to stay, education minister says, Toronto Star, Nov.26, 2019 <https://www.thestar.com/politics/provincial/2019/11/26/full-day-kindergarten-is-here-to-stay-education-minister-says.html>

³ Studies by Janette Pelletier, Ph.D., Applied Psychology and Human Development at the Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study, https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/About_Us/Staff_Faculty/Janette_Pelletier/index.html

Funding sources for licensed early learning & child care centres, and full-day kindergarten:

Province: Ministry of Education funds the municipalities and regions through transfers to their Child Care Service System Managers, Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM); full-day kindergarten is part of the public school system. The before- and after-school programs are fee based with subsidies available.

Federal: the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement

Municipal: Funds administration of system and handles child care subsidies. The school boards receive funding for full-day kindergarten as part of their public system grants.

Funding for parents for child care as of 2019:

- Subsidies handled by the CMSM.
- Ontario Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) providing approximately 300,000 families with up to 75% of their eligible child care expenses
- Federal-provincial Child Care Expense Deduction
- The before- and after-school programs are fee based, with subsidies available, either from the school board or municipality.

Current situation:

- Canada has some of the highest child care costs in OECD countries.⁴
- National average cost for child care (2018): \$9,200. Ontario's is \$12,800.
- Only 53.6% of Ontario's children under 5 are in child care, whereas 78.2% of Quebec's children are, under the National average of 60%.⁵
- In 2018, Ontario has the lowest workforce participation of women between the ages of 25-54⁶.
- Ontario government has:
 - Established CARE tax credit for parents in 2019; will offset 10% of costs for parents, increase female workplace participation by 0.4% (still below national average), increase GDP. BUT FAO sees the need for an additional 0.8% on top of the CARE tax credit to involve more women in the labour force to the level of the national average.
 - In 2018-2019 received from the Canada-Ontario Early Learning and Child Care Agreement \$146.3 million. This agreement is supposed to continue until 2027-2028.
 - For centres:
 - ◆ Removed non-profit priority
 - ◆ \$208 million in 2019 to help retain Registered Early Childhood Educators within child care system, but cancelled the \$50 million Fee Stabilization Grant which covered all staff and reduced costs to parents.

Potential changes:

- Five-year review of Ontario Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
- Registered Early Childhood Educators grant may be lost.
- The cuts that have been put on hold:
 - **January 1, 2020: Expansion Plan** operating funding will change from 100% provincially funded to a **voluntary** 80/20 provincial/ municipal cost-share. The cost share change does not only

⁴ Andre Barker, *INCREASING INCLUSIVENESS FOR WOMEN, YOUTH AND SENIORS IN CANADA ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT WORKING PAPERS No. 1519*, OECD

[http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=ECO/WKP\(2018\)67&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=ECO/WKP(2018)67&docLanguage=En)

⁵ Statistics Canada, Survey on Early Learning and Child Care Arrangements, 2019. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/190410/dq190410a-eng.htm>

⁶ Financial Accountability Office. https://www.fao-on.org/en/Blog/Publications/childcare-ontario-2019#_ftn1

impact future expansion projects, but also **programs and grants created since 2017** under the Expansion Plan.

- **January 1, 2021**, CMSMs will be required to cost share all administrative funding at a rate of 50/50;
- **January 1, 2022**, the threshold for allowable administrative funding CMSMs can spend on child care will be reduced from 10% to 5%.
- Budget freeze on municipalities which might affect the voluntary 20%
- Other downloading will also affect these costs
- Has committed up to \$1 billion over 5 years to create up to **30,000 new spaces in schools** across the province (Oct.25, 2019 news release)

Sources: Financial Accountability Office Ontario *Child Care In Ontario: A Review Of Ontario's New Child Care Tax Credit And Implications For Ontario's Labour Force*; Ontario Coalition of Better Child Care AGM 2019; Ontario Government news releases

NGOs:

Partners:

- Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care <https://www.childcareontario.org/>
- Child Care Now <https://timeforchildcare.ca/>

Others:

- Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario <https://www.aeceo.ca/>
- Atkinson Centre for Society and Child Development <https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson/Main/index.html>
- Canadian Child Care Federation <https://www.cccf-fcsge.ca/>
- Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada <http://childcareadvocacy.ca/>
- Child Care Canada <https://www.childcarecanada.org/>
- College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario <https://www.college-ece.ca/en>
- Home Child Care Association of Ontario <http://www.hccao.com/>
- The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario <https://www.adco-o.on.ca/>
- Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care <http://childcaretoronto.org/>