

CHILD CARE CHALLENGE



NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE

Special Edition

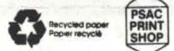
CHILD CARE *part of the* FAMILY

OCBCC Annual Conference '94

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The Voice for Child Care in Ontario

The **Child Care Challenge** is the quarterly newsletter of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

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BLOCK FUNDING - SOCIAL SAFETY NET THREAT

The budget looms ahead of us like the threat of a hurricane. The possibility of a shift from the already weakened CAP, Canada Assistance Plan, to block funding is a real danger. The fears of those who are concerned about Canada's social safety net are becoming realized. It now appears that unless the federal government's plans alter substantially, Minister Martin's budget this month will begin the dismantling of our social programs through the mechanism of block funding.

Block funding would appear as a "mega block" of funding for human services. Funds would transfer directly from the Minister of Finance to the provincial finance departments. This would mean that each province would delegate where these funds are to be distributed. Since there are no enforceable strings attached as to how money is allocated, it might never reach its intended destination. The money could be used to reduce debt load instead of providing human services. The result would be an immediate struggle as each social program has to scramble for its share of the block fund or else face extinction.

Block funding is being used by the federal government as an escape from the responsibility to provide social programs for Canadians. If Ottawa does cut billions from its transfer payments to the provinces as rumoured, then the result will be massive cuts to social assistance, welfare, post secondary education and possibly health care.

The OCBCC is arranging meetings with Ontario's MPs to lobby for action on a national child care program, the *Red Book* promises, and block funding. We want members to participate in these meetings and bring others concerned to discuss these issues with their local politician. The Coalition has developed a lobby kit to assist in efforts to organize advocacy activities and help you when meeting with MPs. This kit describes activities that can help get your message out and provides important background information to educate your MP on child care.

During the election of 1993, the Liberal platform included promises about integrity, investing in people and strengthening our society. Currently the direction the Liberals are taking does not reflect the promised platform discrediting the party. We urged the Liberal government to speak out in the defence of social programs and to show their support for a national child care program.

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STILL NO DEAL ON CHILD CARE REFORM

On November 28th, child care advocates from across the province assembled at Queen's Park in a group lobby with the three provincial parties to encourage Ontario to play a constructive and leading role in federal/provincial negotiations leading to a national child care policy.

In an effort to demonstrate that the provincial government's social justice platform has led to the improvement of child care, the NDP made a remarkable showing of over half of their caucus members in attendance, including a large number of their cabinet members. This was their largest showing of support at an OCBCC lobby since the year of their election.

Tony Silipo, Minister of Community and Social Services, reiterated the NDP government's commitment to reforming the child care system by moving it from a welfare-based to a social service model, and changing the way it is funded but explained that government still does not have the funds to implement child care reform.

Coalition representatives challenged the Minister on the issue of funding. The Coalition questioned why the Ontario government was dragging its feet on signing a 3-year, multi-million dollar Strategic Initiative Fund agreement with the federal government which would revamp Ontario's crumbling child care services. The agreement has been held up due to Ontario's reluctance to sign unless it receives assurance that funds through the *Red Book* commitment would be available to complete child care reform.

The Minister replied that the province was concerned about the exit strategy for the programs when the three year fund ends. The Minister stated that he was looking for a commitment from the federal government that its *Red Book* child care dollars could be used to continue funding the projects started through Strategic Initiatives. Ontario wants its "fair share" of the "Red Book" child care dollars.

In addition, the Minister announced that 100% child care subsidy under JobsOntario training will now be extended until March 31, 1997, as opposed to the original exit date of March, 1996 and that the amendments to the Pay Equity Act would be implemented by the new year.

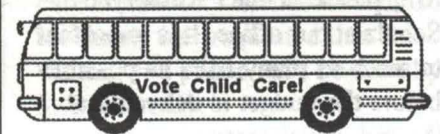
Cam Jackson, the only Progressive Conservative to attend the lobby, referred to the Conservative Party's "*Common Sense Revolution*" policy platform, which states that, if elected, the conservative government would make 10% cuts across every government program in their effort to reduce the provincial debt.

As Coalition members pointed out, the Conservative Party's policy does not make any sense. The proposed cuts would reduce child care spaces further, when more spaces are needed across Ontario. Cuts would also increase barriers to employment. Child Care is an area that needs additional funding, not cuts.

Coalition members were disappointed with the Liberal caucus' showing of only 5 members. We were also discouraged that after 4 years of research and communication with the child care community, the Liberal party would not make a commitment to child care reform and did not suggest that they would support it in the future.

VOTING FOR CHILD CARE IN 1995

It appears that the voters of Ontario may be heading to the polls this spring. Rumoured for late May, the provincial election will determine if the public is satisfied with the Rae government or if they will elect a new Liberal or Conservative government. In any case, the Coalition plans to be in the middle of all the election activity, lobbying candidates and educating the public to ensure that child care is a major component of this provincial election.



The major political parties are now preparing themselves for the upcoming election by holding candidate selection meetings and campaign training institutes all over Ontario. Members of the Coalition and the child care community are encouraged to become involved in the candidate selection process or an election campaign in the provincial ridings to promote child care issues. Make child care an important issue for your candidates. Let your candidates know that their position on child care will influence your vote and the votes of your community!

On election day, vote for the candidate who supports your position.

**VOTE FOR
CHILDCARE!**

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There is no question that the safety net is in severe need of repair. Despite this, the system has served as an essential service over the years. Even more stress has been placed on it as our tough economic market produces low employment opportunity and lower wages for millions of workers. If CAP is eliminated, then the social safety net may crumble. Join us in the fight against block funding and help us lobby for a national child care program!

If you can not meet with your local MP, please contact Katheryne Schulz at our office. It is important to reach as many MPs as possible before the budget is delivered at the end of February.

If you cannot take the time to meet directly with your MP, invite him/her to a child care centre board meeting, or try writing or phoning.

The bottom line is that whatever the design of the new financial arrangement, welfare and social services will likely shoulder the worst of the damage. The impact will be felt by all Canadians regardless of income.

The Canada we know today may be noticeably different at the end of February.

CHILD CARE: PART OF THE FAMILY OCBCC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1994

Leading international and Canadian policy analysts challenged both the provincial and federal governments to move on their commitments to child care during the OCBCC's annual conference, **Child Care: Part of the Family**.

Jytte Jensen, Danish child care expert for the European Union; feminist/journalist Judy Rebick; child psychiatrist, Dr. Paul Steinhauer, child development expert, Dr. Daniel Keating, co-author of the recent *Yours, Mine, Ours* report of the Premier's Council on Health, Well-being and Social Justice, and feminist/activist, Sunera Thobani, President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, headlined this conference which took place at the Howard Johnson Hotel, on November 25-27, 1994.

Representatives from child care, education, anti-poverty, children's mental health, social planning, labour and professional organizations as well as federal, municipal and provincial officials came together to examine the importance of child care from a socio-economic, child development and political viewpoint.

The three day event began with a series of workshops with experts from a variety of fields providing the latest information and resources in child care including: infectious illnesses in a child care setting; integrating child care; and the introduction of a new school-age care model developed by OCBCC's School-Age Child Care Committee.

To open the annual conference, Danish child care expert, Jytte Jensen presented an overview of the child care services in Denmark noting the importance of publicly funded child care for social and economic growth in the community. Referring to the Danish experience, Ms. Jensen explained that the present Danish system provides child care for children one year of age and older. She also explained that the attitude towards child care is very progressive. Government officials are very proud of their child care system and regard it as an important factor when promoting business development.

Judy Rebick, one of Canada's preeminent feminists and talk show hosts, encouraged the audience to make the link between women's issues and child care. Child care is a barrier to women's equality and that the resistance the child care community experiences is related to the resistance the women's movement experiences. She noted that it is no coincidence that salaries are low in the female-dominated child care profession. If we fail to focus on the position that child care is a women's issue we may risk the development of a targeted system.

She also warned that although the federal government appears to be in support of child care in the Social Security Review, it is important for the child care community not to abandon our coalitions and supporters who are working against the cuts proposed in the review, and not to naively trust the government's position on child care. After all, no commitment has been made to a national child care policy, and the outcome of the review process could be detrimental to everyone in Canada, including our children.

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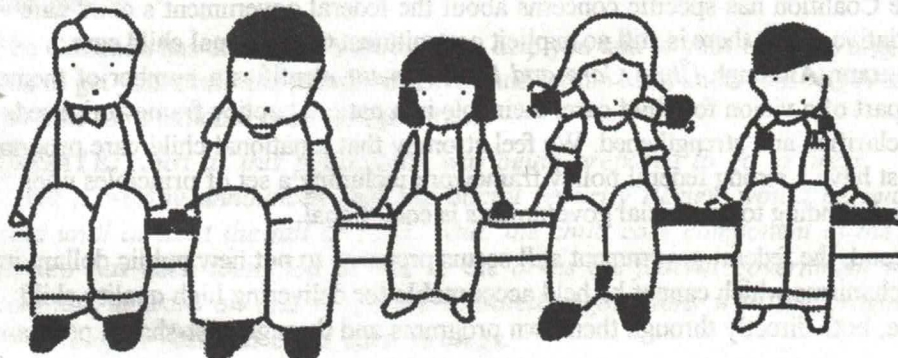
Focusing on child development, Dr. Paul Steinhauer illustrated the importance of a good head start for children: through the family; through the community; and through a quality child care system. He explained that if we do not make an investment in our children at an early age, we may find ourselves with adults who are unable to contribute fully to the community.

In responding to the federal government's Social Security Review, OISE's Dr. Daniel Keating warned that if social programs are cut to reduce debt, in the long run, Canada may be faced with an enormous social debt that will be costly both socially and economically. A quality child care system is an investment in our children at critical points in their development, he said.

A policy development session, facilitated by Martha Friendly of the University of Toronto's Childcare Resource and Research Unit and Jamie Kass of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 2204, launched the Sunday morning sessions. The recommendations developed during Saturday afternoon's policy sessions were discussed and prepared to be forwarded to the OCBCC Council. The Council is to examine these policy recommendations for consideration in preparing submissions to the provincial and federal governments. The key themes identified were: family leave, a shorter work week, employment equity, child care reform, and a national child care program.

In closing the weekend long conference, Sunera Thobani, President of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, encouraged participants to become actively involved in the Social Security Review process. She also warned participants of the federal government strategy to "divide and rule". Although child care is presently receiving attention from the federal government, it is important that the Coalition not abandon our goals for social justice and keep in mind that women who live in poverty often have children who live in poverty.

Canada's need for a publicly funded, high quality child care system coupled with supports for families with children were the prevalent themes throughout the conference. Our conference experts from the medical, education, political and social justice community were unified in their support of child care and the fact that the care of children outside the family is one of the most critical issues of the decade.



WHO CARES ABOUT NOEL? ... WE DO!

A dear friend of the Coalition and Chairperson of the OCBCC School-Age Child Care Committee, Noel Young, has been diagnosed with a terminal condition.

Noel is a leader within the school-age child care community, a mentor to many child care professionals, and a friend to the Coalition's members and staff.

Noel has many friends in the child care community across Canada so his family has requested that visiting and phone calls be done by invitation only.

He is presently recovering from surgery and is busy working on child care projects and the next issue of "Exploring Environments", which will include a special feature on Noel and his work.

The "Who cares about Noel" committee has requested that you send a card and donate the flower money to a fund set up to cover additional costs for private or future care. If you would like to donate, please send a cheque or money order payable to Lyn Wilson, c/o Kathy Hartley at 100 Raglan Avenue, Apt #318, Toronto, Ontario M6C 2L3.

Who Cares About Noel?

**The Ontario Coalition for
Better Child Care
Cares!**



EARLY EDUCATION A SOUND INVESTMENT

The Royal Commission on Learning considered the best use of education resources when it recommended full day educational programs for children 3 years old.

A wide body of research indicates that children who have an opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills through quality early education programs are more "school ready", more likely to perform better in school and show advanced language and cognitive development, as well as improved reading and math performance in later years.

The research documents the importance of early education in providing a sound foundation for future academic performance. Remedial education programs can never fully compensate children who do not receive timely positive learning experiences. The absence of this stimulation can result in life-long developmental problems.

Full day early childhood education programs would also respond to the disjointed patchwork of arrangements which now typifies the average day of 3-5 year olds. The National Child Care Study called the kindergarten years "the most difficult child care years" for parents.

"Parents who want to use kindergarten for their children often rely on several different child care arrangements in a day in order to string together care for their child," commented Carol Gott, OCBCC president. "Such juggling is trying for parents, however it is most stressful for children who respond best in situations where there is a continuum of care."

THE SOCIAL SECURITY REVIEW

On October 5, 1994, Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Human Resource Development, released *"Improving Social Security in Canada"*, the Liberal government's discussion paper on ways to reform Canada's social security system.

"Child Care and Development", a supplement to *"Improving Social Security in Canada"*, is a more detailed analysis of not **whether** but **how** federal child care policy could develop. It identifies the key themes of affordability, availability, quality, and accountability, and identifies that jurisdictional issues will be important. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is pleased that discussion of the key issue of auspice suggests that new funds will be directed toward not-for-profit services.

On November 29, 1994 the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. Coalition representatives outlined for the Committee our proposal for funding reform. This proposal sets the stage for a universally accessible, publicly-funded child care system. This could be initiated by reorganizing funding arrangements to allow the provincial government to fully fund child care services, while charging parents affordable fees on a sliding scale.

The Coalition concurs when *Improving Social Security in Canada* observes that child care is an important employment support for parents, an effective early childhood development tool, a critical support for children at risk, and a creator of jobs, through the hiring of child care workers.

Overall, it is reassuring that the Government of Canada agrees that "child care is a priority for the reform of social security programs". We have long argued that affordable, high quality child care is part of the solution to the social and economic challenges facing families and communities. We believe that child care is an investment in the infrastructure of our communities and in our future, not a drain on our wealth or resources.

While Coalition members oppose the overall budget cutting premise of the Social Security Review, there is support for the federal government's discussion of a national child care program. We believe that it provides an opportunity for governments at both levels to work together with the child care community in developing a system of child care that supports families and children.

The Coalition has specific concerns about the federal government's child care initiative. First, there is still no explicit commitment to a national child care program. Although *Child Care and Development* identifies a number of themes as part of a vision for child care, their role in a national policy framework needs to be clarified and strengthened. We feel strongly that a national child care program must have a strong federal policy framework including a set of principles upon which funding to provincial governments is conditional.

Second, the federal government still seems prepared to put new public dollars into mechanisms which cannot be held accountable for delivering high quality child care, both directly through their own programs and through cost-shared programs

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developed by the provinces (for example, funds through the Working Income Supplement and through training programs funded by Strategic Initiatives).

Third, there is not a federal commitment to base fund child care services as proposed by the Coalition. In this regard, the introduction of child care funding reform as a Strategic Initiative through a federal grant to Ontario would be a critical first step. Ontario can serve as a model for the federal government in their negotiations with other provinces. We are extremely concerned about proposed changes to the Canada Assistance Plan. We have long argued that child care should not be funded through the welfare system but needs its own funding program. Until the commitment to a new funding program is made, any moves to limit or further restrict CAP funding will only make matters worse for child care services.

Fourth, the Coalition believes that initiatives to promote healthy child development will not be successful without the support of a universally accessible, comprehensive, inclusive child care system. We do not support a split between "typical" child care programs that support the needs of all parents and targeted programs that focus only on children at risk. Targeting programs was the approach the former federal government took when it "killed" plans for a national child care program. We do not want to see the continuation of a Tory plan in this government's new initiative.

In a September meeting with federal officials to discuss federal child care commitments, the Ontario for Better Child Care Coalition joined other child care organizations in urging the federal government to use this opportunity to establish a new national child care program. A national program must be governed by national principles assuring accessibility for all, comprehensiveness, high quality, public funding and accountability. The Coalition, like others in the child care community and provincial governments, stressed that it would be counter-productive merely to add new spaces to a dysfunctional patchwork of policy, funding and services.

Minister Axworthy apparently concurs. During a consultation on the Social Security Review in Toronto, on October 11, the Minister talked about a national child care strategy, with national principles "similar to those in the Canada Health Act". He also referred to the need for flexibility in using new funds not only to expand spaces, but to strengthen existing child care services by enhancing quality and training.

The Coalition has developed a lobby kit to help you talk to your MP. We urge you to get your staff and parents involved and let the MPs know that **NOW** is the time for a national child care program.

UPDATE: *Just as this publication was being prepared to go to press, Lloyd Axworthy announced that the Social Security Review would be put on hold until at least the fall of 1995. But, the child care component of the Review has been identified as one of the areas the federal government will continue to work on and they have initiated negotiations with the provinces to develop a national child care strategy.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCBCC Executive/Network Meeting
Metro Hall, Room 310
Friday, March 31, 1995
Network Meeting: 8:30 - 10:30 am
Executive Meeting: 11:00 am
Call: Eileen Condon - (416) 538-0628

Rural Child Care Now... We're Worth It! Conference
Sponsored by the Ontario Rural Child Care Committee, from March 2 - 4, 1995 at Geneva Park, Orillia, Ontario. This conference will bring together those concerned with rural child care needs and those implementing rural child care options to share experiences, successes and challenges. For more information call: (519) 986-3692

OCBCC Council Meeting
Metro Hall, 27th Floor
Saturday, April 1, 1995 - 10:00 am
Call: Eileen Condon - (416) 538-0628

Growing '95
The 1995 Integrated Children's Conference, Growing '95, will be held at the International Plaza and Conference Centre in Toronto, May 7-11, 1995. Featured in program: Dr. Fraser Mustard, Steve Donahue and Barbara Coloroso. For more information call: The Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies: 416-366-8115.

Pathways for Healing: A mental health and disability project
Friday, March 31, 1995
The Westin Hotel - Ottawa
This conference will address the current state of mental health of people with disabilities and develop tools and strategies for promoting mental health within this community. For more information call: University of Ottawa-613-564-4263.

International Women's Day
March 8, 1995 - contact your local YWCA or any local women's organization for the scheduled local activities.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY

Under the new Employment Equity Act, child care programs with 10 or more employees are required to do the following by March, 1996:

1. Conduct a workforce analysis to find out how many workers are members of the four designated groups and to determine the occupation in which they work. The four designated groups are: (using the language of the Act) women; aboriginal peoples; visible minorities; persons with disabilities.
2. Conduct a review of employment systems to identify what policies or practices need to be changed or implemented in order to remove barriers to employment or promotion.
3. Set goals and timetables within the workplace for the hiring and promotion of members of the four designated groups; (in the proportion that they exist in the community.)
4. Set goals and measures to eliminate employment barriers.
5. Implement education and community strategies in the workplace to help staff understand employment equity and reason for the legislation. An employee, for the purposes of the Act is a permanent, seasonal, term, on commission or independent contractor. There is no cap on the hours of work.

OCBCC Employment Equity Update: An OCBCC Employment Equity Committee has been formed and an employment equity kit to assist child care programs comply with the act will be made available to OCBCC members in March, 1995.

ONTARIO/OTTAWA DEAL A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH FOR CHILD CARE

The pending deal that the province has struck with the federal government would represent a breakthrough in Canadian social policy.

If the package represents the child care funding reform proposal that Ontario has developed over the past four years, it would move child care from a welfare service to a public service.

The reported deal would be funded through the Strategic Initiatives Fund (SIF), an \$800-million, 3-year program announced in last February's federal budget. This amount would be for all provinces, Ontario's share being \$80 million. It was made available to provinces to finance new methods of delivering social programs as part of the Social Security Review. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care had pressed the provincial government to apply to the SIF to start child care reform following the province's announcement last April that it would not proceed with reform due to lack of federal funding.

The federal/provincial deal was reached in late November, but Ontario has refused to sign on until it receives assurances from Ottawa that future federal funding for child care would be available to Ontario to complete its reform objectives. Of concern to the province is the exit strategy for the programs when the three year fund ends. It wants a commitment from the federal government that its *Red Book* child care dollars could be used to continue funding and expand the projects started through Strategic Initiatives.

The federal government has since replied to the Ontario government that although there is an opportunity to reach a Strategic Initiative agreement, the federal government will not sign a deal conditional on Ontario's access to "Red Book" dollars.

If media reports are correct, the deal between Ontario and Ottawa contains sufficient dollars to implement child care funding reform in most of the province. The province estimates full reform will cost \$150-million annually. The SIF deal is reported to contain \$800-million over 3 years. A future commitment of funding through a new federal child care program would permit Ontario to spread funding reform throughout the province. This reformed method of child care funding can be used as a model for Ottawa to use in its negotiations with other provinces as it develops a national child care program.

If the Strategic Initiatives Funding agreement can be reached, Ontario would be the first province to implement a publicly-funded child care system. Because this is an essential step in securing a national child care program, it is important not only to children and families in Ontario but to all Canadians.

A national child care program will please not only Canadian families but also meet the federal government's policy direction for deficit reduction and most importantly address issues of social justice by fostering economic growth, job creation, and reduce child poverty.

RURAL CHILD CARE, WE'RE WORTH IT!

On March 2-4, 1995 at Geneva Park in Orillia, the Ontario Rural Child Care Committee is sponsoring the 2nd annual rural child care conference titled, **Rural Child Care, We're Worth It!** This two day event will bring together child care experts and providers concerned with rural child care issues. The conference will provide the opportunity to network and develop skills in community building and advocacy. Delegates will examine rural child care needs and how they impact on many aspects of community life, such as, health and safety, employment, local economies, education and equity.

The pre-conference round table scheduled will discuss the implementation of actions to improve access of child care supports and services to rural Ontario families.

"We've invited a total of eight ministers to our conference to specifically discuss our requests for action", said Mary-Ann Meagher, chairperson of this year's conference.

"Our goal is to support and empower rural communities to identify their own child care needs, and with the support of government, build solutions. Parents, professionals and community members are encouraged to attend," concludes Mary-Ann Meagher.

REPORT FROM METRO TORONTO

Once again, Metro child care programs, agencies and advocates are gearing up for "Budget Battle 1995". This year, as always, it promises to be a knock out fight. Metro Council has already admitted that even if they flatline all the budgets it would mean a 5% increase in property taxes, and the anti-tax organizations threaten to mobilize a mass revolt if that happens.

Since 1992 the child care budget in Metro has faced over \$10 million in cuts, parent user fees have more than doubled and our waiting list for subsidized spaces stands at 18,000. After the fall of child care reform, Metro Council decided not to recognize our actual costs, as promised, and have now moved to paying per diems at a 98% optimal rate. This 98% optimal rate on per diems is playing havoc with the stability of centres as Metro has also placed a freeze on intake.

In addition, Metro Council is telling programs that they will not fund staff salary increases for 1994 or 1995. This is having a dramatic effect on child care centres across the city. Many centres that provided salary increases in 1994 are looking at salary roll backs to 1993 levels. The only other alternative is to find the money from the centre surplus or **raise full fee rates!**

Although the news is not good or new, it just goes to further prove that the patchwork system of child care delivery in Ontario is less than adequate. Each year we are hit with something that further destabilizes our system. The message to be promoted is that 63% of all women with children under the age of 6 years are in the work force, and deserve a stable system in which they can access quality affordable child care.



GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT THROUGH VIDEO

Last spring the child care community was shocked when the provincial government decided to renege on its promise to implement child care reform. Coalition members were left feeling exhausted, disheartened and frustrated.

Too much is at stake to let child care reform die. It is imperative that reform remain on the political agenda and become a major component of the upcoming provincial elections.

To assist with public education and lobbying, the OCBCC, the Metro Toronto Coalition for Better Child Care joined forces with funding from the Children's Aid Society and the Trillium Foundation to develop a video on child care reform. The video is specifically designed for public education, and in particular, for parents, child care boards of directors, and child care providers on the funding crisis and the need for reform.

After its presentation during the OCBCC conference, viewers commented on the importance of the video as an educational tool in getting our message out. Consequently, many conference participants purchased the video to bring back to their own organizations and launch advocacy activities.

If you would like more information regarding child care reform, or a copy of the Child Care Funding Reform video, please contact our office at 416-538-0628 or forward \$15.00 (taxes included) plus \$1.50 (postage) to our office.

THE NORTHERN NETWORK

In October 1994, N.W.R.D.C.C. (Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee) hosted 2 forums in the northwest district. Held in Mara-thon and Kenora, these forums examined the diverse needs of families and caregivers in the 90's.

The Committee has also joined in a collaborative effort with the AECE,O and the CTC to publish a newsletter. This newsletter will address child care issues in Northwestern Ontario.

On the political front, there has been an announcement in our area from the Ministry stating that there has been a 1% cut in funding to resource centres and resource teacher budgets for 1995-96.

The Regional Daycare Committee has moved it's office to a more amenable location. For now, the mailing address remains the same.

Sioux Look-Out celebrated National Child Care Day on November 20th with a luncheon at Norah Love Children's Centre. Here children decorated boxes with cards attached saying "Children are Special Gifts". These boxes were displayed at various businesses in the community.

Norah Love Children's Centre has received \$45,000 for their playground rehabilitation and toddler equipment and \$38,000 for additional staff.

REPORT FROM OTTAWA-CARLTON

Infant ratios have been a pressing problem in our area over the past 4 years. The DNA requires an infant program to maintain full staff child ratio throughout the entire day. We have been unable to meet these ratios without increasing the staff complement. The SSEP program has provided increased staffing for many years, however, this year community infant programs did not receive the additional staff. The Ottawa Child Care Association (OCCA) and CUPE 2204 have been working together to lobby the provincial and regional government to provide funding to allow programs to meet ratios. Minister of Community and Social Services, Tony Silipo, agreed that additional funding will be available from the province to meet ratios. Now the local community will lobby the regional government to ensure their 20% share is forthcoming.

A Child Care Council is now underway in Ottawa-Carlton. Bylaws, structure, strategic planning and out-reach are all on the agenda. The Council has had to get up and running quickly with responses to the Social Security Review and the provincial initiatives around school-age.

Finally, alternate day attendance of full day 4 and 5 year old kindergarten is resurfacing as a hot topic on the agendas of local school board meetings as attempts are made to cut budgets and save money on busing. The OCCA along with kindergarten child care programs and parents will lobby and address local school board trustees to try to have this proposal rejected.

COUNCIL URGED NOT TO MISS OUT ON OPPORTUNITY

After the hectic schedule of the OCBCC annual conference, OCBCC council members from across the province gathered at the Westbury, Howard Johnson Plaza, for the OCBCC Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. The agenda included an extensive discussion on the Social Security Review and the possibility for child care reform funding through the Strategic Initiatives Fund. The council also received an update on the Network activities (see page 11), heard regional and pay equity reports and held the election of Executive and Council members.

The OCBCC Federal Issues Working Group reported on: the Liberal election commitment to child care outlined in their election campaign manual the *Red Book*; The Strategic Initiatives Fund; and on the Social Security Review. In light of the set back in child care reform at the provincial level, the Coalition decided to focus our advocacy efforts towards the federal government.

Vivian McCaffrey, Chair of the Working Group cautioned that although child care appears well placed within the main discussion of the Social Security Review, the challenge for the Coalition will be to develop and promote national child care policies while working against the proposed cuts contained in the Review with other social justice organizations. It was stressed that if the opportunity for a national child care system is missed, it may take another 10 years to get back on the political agenda.

WORKGROUP ESTABLISHED TO REVIEW NETWORK

On March 25, 1994, Network executive representatives met for a day to talk about the role of the network and its community representatives.

During this meeting members identified communication barriers between local and regional Network members, and executive members, and an overlap between the network and local coalition members around the province as concerns to be worked on.

To address these concerns, a new organizational structure was proposed. This model amalgamates the membership categories of the local coalitions/Network members and clarifies the role of the executive representatives in these categories.

As an interim solution, the following steps were adopted:

- ♦ each executive meeting be preceded with a 2 hour Network meeting;
- ♦ every attempt be made to ensure that meetings with government representatives include the regional character of the province;
- ♦ Network representatives have access to a small amount of funding, to support out of pocket expenses for communication purposes;
- ♦ as part of the annual conference, one half day will be devoted to an organized network meeting.

Fifty Network members from across Ontario met on the morning of Friday, November 26th, prior to the opening of the OCBCC's annual conference, to discuss the future development of the Network. Members discussed their current and future needs and reviewed the network membership package noting the importance of the Network News, the insurance programs, the workshops, the meetings with MCSS and the ongoing advocacy work. They noted a need to improve communication, parent participation, the OCBCC software package, "Newviews", and the need for a new Coalition structure.

At the council meeting of November 27, a workgroup was established to review the structure of the Network and its relationship to members. The workgroup will make recommendations at the next council meeting.

- ♦ Zeenat Janmohammed, Coordinator of the Metro Coalition for Better Child Care has taken a temporary leave of absence to teach at George Brown College's Early Childhood Education Department. Filling in for Gail Hunter while she is on maternity leave, Zeenat will be returning to the Coalition the end of September. Filling in at MTCBCC are Cherly MacDonald and Mary Anne Bedard who will work share until Zeenat returns.

- ♦ Janet Davis, Child Care Coordinator for the Toronto Board of Education, has taken a temporary leave of absence until the end of June to work as the Special/Policy Assistant to the Minister of Education.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Strategies for Working Women

By: Alice de Wolff

This book examines current dramatic changes in the relationship between employment and caring responsibilities in Canada. Its review and analysis of Canadian statistics and international comparisons, and its discussion of family leave, shorter work time and workplace service options combine to make it a unique and valuable resource. It is designed as a convenient reference for union and community activists, social planners and students.

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