

NEWSLETTER  
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**January 1987**

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# Day Care in Alberta

## It's mostly privatized, so standards and quality suffer

Although the Alberta government, on a per capita basis, provides more generous funding for child care than do most other provinces, its encouragement of privately-run day care centres has created serious problems. Staff training is inadequate, and standards relating to maximum group sizes and quality of care go virtually unenforced. Inspection by licensing officers is negligible. No effort is made to have private operators account for the millions of dollars they receive in subsidies. Not surprisingly, a study commissioned for the Sharing Our Future conference recommended that for-profit day care centres be prohibited.

### Here are The Facts:

**T**he importance of day care in modern Canadian society is undeniable. In 1983, over 5 million women were working outside the home, and these included 51% of women with children under the age of 6. Half a million women in Canada are seeking quality day care for their children, but only a minority of them are getting it.

The ideal day care system was outlined by the Task Force on the Child as Citizen set up by the Canadian Council on Children and Youth for the International Year of the Child in 1979. "We must reject the concept of day care as a baby-sitting service for working mothers," the Task Force declared. "Day care services must be perceived as supports and enrichments to family life in general which offer the young child essential opportunities for socialization.

"Used to best advantage, day care would be a universally available early education program funded by health and education authorities. Such a system would provide two-way universal access. Designed with imagination and creativity, it might offer an important system of support to all parents..."

Although Canada is still far away from creating this kind of ideal day care system, we should not lose sight of this goal. Day care *should* serve the needs and interests of all children. Experience has shown that quality day care can greatly assist in the social, emotional and cognitive development of children, and that, conversely, poor quality day care can have harmful effects on them.

There are three key conditions for quality care: (1) a high ratio of workers to children; (2) small group sizes; and (3) professionally trained and accredited staff.

Untrained staff with good levels of experience and motivation can achieve quality care, provided they work under a trained supervisor, and as long as the other two conditions are met.

A trained worker, on the other hand, *cannot* operate effectively when she has to care for a large number of children at the same time.

In the past, and still today to a large extent, day care has been seen as a special service for a small number of families who are poor, or have a

handicapped child, or who have other problems requiring social assistance. This attitude is reflected in both provincial and federal policies. The federal government, for example, will only subsidize a portion of the cost of day care for poor parents who place their children in non-profit day cares, which are often of a specialized nature.

There are, however, compelling arguments that day care should be *universally* available to all parents of young children – that it should take the form of a universal social service, on the same basis as education and Medicare.

### Profit or non-profit?

**T**he role of profit-making day care centres is a controversial one. Alberta has taken the lead in encouraging private day care development, as part of its general philosophy of encouraging private enterprise in the delivery of social services. The provincial government has provided generous funding for the operating expenses of day cares run for profit, a condition of these grants supposedly

being that the provincial standards on square metres per child and staff per child be adhered to. This has led, almost by default, to the provision of more day care spaces for children below the age of 6 in Alberta than in any other province.

Alberta's day care expenditure of \$151 per child (from infancy to 5 years of age) is nearly two-and-a-half times greater than the \$61 average for the other provinces. Also, because of the availability of operating grant subsidies for every child regardless of parental income or the type of day care attended, the average monthly fee for a child attending day care in Alberta is some \$80 less than for a child in Ontario.

Alberta has thus come closer than any other province – at least, statistically – to the ideal of providing day care as a universal social system, available to all parents at subsidized costs. But the pattern of service delivery in Alberta is unsatisfactory, with 70% of day care spaces being provided by private enterprise – by far the highest proportion of any province.

On the debit side, Alberta's requirements on square metres of indoor space per child are among Canada's lowest, and its standards for staff training are the country's worst. All the other provinces have regulations that require a certain percentage of staff to have training. *Alberta stands alone in requiring no more from its day care workers than that they be 18 years of age or older.*

In reviewing standards and regulations for day care across Canada, it must also be noted that there is a large gap between Alberta's generally good standards and the province's enforcement of them. We have found, for example, widespread ignorance by day care centres in Alberta of regulations on group size, and a failure of licensing authorities to enforce regulations on group size.

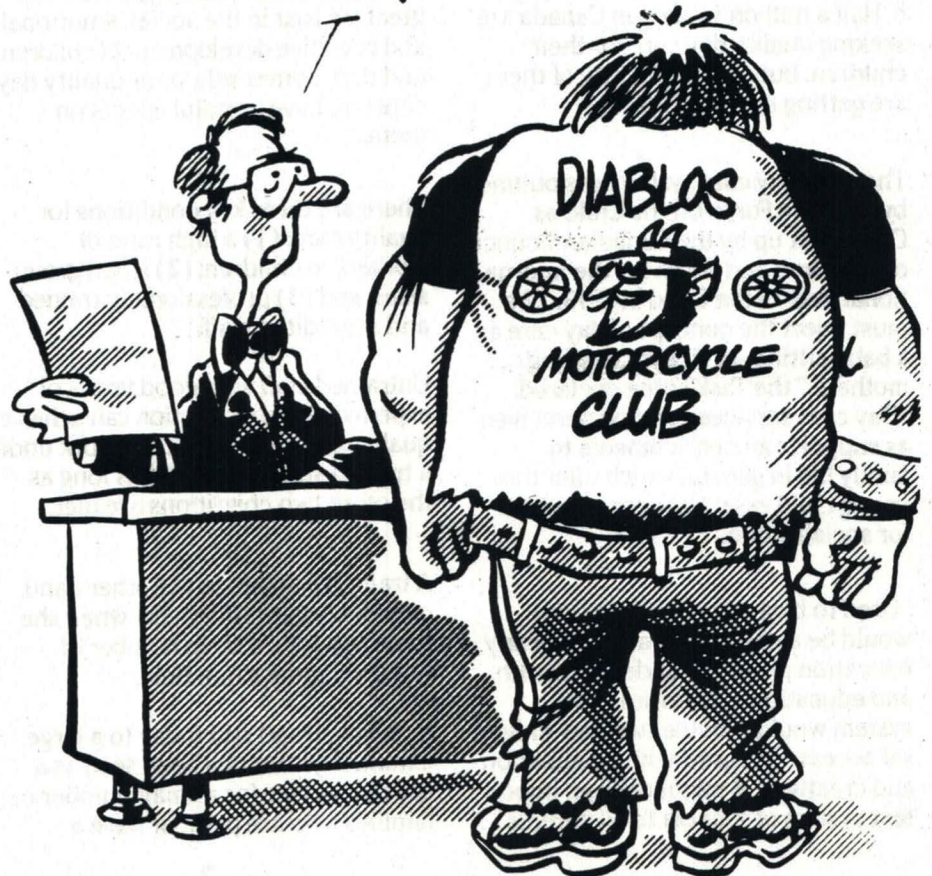
It is clear that the Alberta government, committed to the free enterprise principle, has extended this philosophy to the provision of day care, as it has to many other areas of social service delivery. Private enterprise day cares are entrusted to fulfill the conditions for the operating subsidy largely on an honour basis. This naive trust in the efficiency and good-will of

profit-making centres is, according to observers (including those within the licensing branch itself), a significant weakness in the Alberta system.

Alberta is clearly generous in its funding of day care, and has acceded to the lobby of the independent operators that the raising of standards has to be supported by appropriate funding increases. It is perhaps the essence of the free enterprise position to seek *maximum* government subsidies, combined with the *minimum* government control or interference in day-to-day operations.

While some for-profit day care centres do act responsibly and provide quality care, the manifest abuses by a significant minority of profit centres leads us to the inescapable conclusion that legislation should be introduced which subsidizes quality day care, fosters community initiative in setting up new day care, *but makes unlawful the taking of profit from the day care needs of parents and*

MISTER, UM, DIABLO,  
HAVE YOU HAD ANY  
PREVIOUS DAY CARE  
EXPERIENCE?



*children. Ultimately, such profit-making is exploitive and usurious in nature, and is unacceptable in a civilized society.*

In reaching such a conclusion, we are acutely aware of the dilemma that such a proposal may well be *political unacceptable* in a conservative province such as Alberta, where the government is moving increasingly toward more privatization, rather than less. But we are convinced that Alberta's laissez-faire policy for the private centres, giving generous subsidies with a minimum of control, has failed to ensure that all, or even a majority of them, provide quality care.

## Licensing and control problems

The province employs only 21 licensing officers, most of them in the Edmonton and Calgary areas. This works out to one inspector for every 37 centres. In practice, the licensing officer will visit each centre by appointment, once every three months. Of course, this allows centre to have everything in tip-top shape when the inspector arrives.

Some unscrupulous day cares will hire a worker for the week surrounding the visit so as to give the appearance of maintaining adequate staff/child ratios. In some private day cares, the registered owner may be counted as a staff member for licensing purposes, even though he is seldom on the premises.

Licensing officers have learned of such abuses, not usually through visits but because day care workers or parents of children have passed on the information. Unfortunately, licensing officers rarely act decisively in these matters. They complain of overwork, and also of the reluctance of higher government officials to revoke the license of a centre, even when it is blatantly violating regulations. There is a widely-held belief among inspectors that their recommendation that a centre's license be revoked will rarely be supported by the provincial Director of Day Care or by the Minister. To our knowledge, there have been only two cases in Alberta of a day care license being permanently revoked.

This leniency has persisted despite some serious incidents of neglect and abuse. One centre closed for the night with an 18-month-old child locked up inside alone. The inspector's report of "very inadequate care" was ignored by his superiors. In another case involving physical and sexual abuse of children, the centre's license was first revoked, and then restored after a hearing before the Social Services Appeal Panel – not because the charges of abuse were disproved, but because of a technical error in the presentation of the licensing department's evidence.

The province's Social Care Review Committee does little to enforce day care standards, but relies mainly on moral suasion. Its recommendations for improving the application of standards have met no favourable response from the Minister of Social Services.

During 1984 and 1985, the Committee identified 13 day care centres of exceptionally poor quality, which showed no improvement between inspections. So the Committee simply hired a consultant in child development, who worked with these delinquent operators to try and improve their care of children. None of their licenses were ever suspended.

Alberta has many good day care centres, but at least 10% of them offer services of frighteningly poor quality, which must inevitably harm the children in their care. The extraordinary tolerance which the government has extended to these for-profit centres can only be explained by an overriding commitment to the use of private enterprise in social service delivery – a philosophy that transcends any belief that the welfare of the children should be paramount. *When the interests of children and the interests of private enterprise conflict, it seems that in Alberta's day care system private enterprise always prevails.*

Ten per cent of Alberta's day cares are excellent, while some 80% have been categorized as mediocre to satisfactory. Both profit and non-profit centres fall within this middle group, whose standards are close to those of most day cares in Canada.

## The lack of training

The issue of education and of workers' training is a crucial one, and a point on which advocates of non-profit care disagree with the profit centres. It is claimed that the independent operators don't want to employ trained workers because of the increased payroll costs and correspondingly decreased profits. The independent operators counter that they would be delighted to employ more trained workers if the government would subsidize the additional costs, in the same way that it subsidizes the staff/child ratio standards.

Several organizations that represent the interests of day care workers and operators – including the Day Care Society of Alberta and the Early Childhood Professional Association of Alberta – have been active in calling for training standards for day care workers. But the government has steadfastly refused to incorporate even minimum training requirements in its regulations.

The province most often cited as a model in day care training standards is Manitoba, which recognizes three levels of registered child care workers, ranging from the full Diploma or Degree Graduate (C.C.W.III) to an assistant qualified by long experience

and good practice (C.C.W.I). Manitoba requires all day care directors to be qualified at the highest level, and all group leaders to have at least the intermediate qualification of a college certificate in early childhood development.

We commend these standards for adoption by all provinces, with the support of the federal government through cost-sharing arrangements. It is clear that, if standards are to be raised and day care is to become a quality service available to all, then the federal government will have to be involved both in the setting of standards and in comprehensive cost-sharing for all types of day care, both profit and non-profit. If private enterprise day care centres are to be allowed to exist – a highly questionable policy – it is logical that we should control their quality.

## Poor working conditions

A survey of Alberta Community College early childhood development and education graduates who went to work in day care centres found a high degree of dissatisfaction with pay and working conditions. The median salary of diploma graduates (including those with several years of previous day care experience) was \$6.75 an hour (in 1983) for those in private day cares, and \$8.00 an hour for those working in non-profit centres. The average hourly rates of pay for untrained commercial day care workers was less than \$6.00 an hour.

Graduates of diploma programs who enter day care employment face a number of frustrations. First of all, they face, along with their co-workers, a gruelling eight-hour day during which their attention must not wander from the young children in their care. They have short vacation periods, and they are subject to unpaid layoffs when enrolments in the day care decline. In some centres, if three or more children do not attend on any particular day, a worker may be laid off immediately, without pay.

Another source of frustration for the diploma graduate is that in many private day care centres the employer will be unqualified, and thus not be receptive to her suggestions for improving programming for young children.

In the present system, in Alberta as in most other provinces, someone loses in day care. The pressure to keep costs down – in both profit and non-profit centres – discourages efforts to improve the general levels of day care training and the recruitment of trained workers. But children may suffer at the hands of untrained or poorly trained workers. But if trained workers are employed and paid decent wages, fees inevitably rise unless governments offer an appropriate subsidy; or parents may be forced to seek unsatisfactory alternatives, with unqualified child-minders and babysitters.

## Conclusions

The operation of day care in Alberta leads to three important conclusions.

1. The Alberta government has been generous in giving subsidies to day care operators, including those operating on a for-profit basis. But the government has made no effort whatso-

ever to audit or call to account the millions of dollars given in day care subsidies. This unwillingness to require an accounting of grants to private enterprise extends to many other areas in Alberta, and is a significant weakness of the government's social policies. In our view, for-profit day cares should be prohibited.

2. The central weakness of the Alberta day care system – apart from its failure to specify staff training levels – is the failure to insist that important aspects of its regulations, such as those on maximum group sizes, be properly enforced. The possibility that the operating subsidies could be used as a means to ensure compliance with the standards has been ignored. The system of inspection by licensing officers is not working well, and the officers have been unable to check abuses by some day care operators.

3. The alleged need for cutbacks in social service budgeting has provided a symbolic excuse for the failure to increase the numbers of licensing

officers and day care consultants, as well as an excuse not to implement earlier recommendations on staff training requirements. However, we would argue that improving the quality of services for young children should be the primary goal of social policy, and, to the extent that such expenditures reduce the need for expensive social service intervention in later years, may be considered to be cost-saving in the long run.

*(This is a summarized version of "Day Care in Alberta: A Review with National Implications," a Study by Christopher Bagley, Ph.D., Chair of Child Welfare, Faculty of Social Welfare, University of Calgary).*



## LETTERS: Organizing Against Commercial Care

The following is a re-print of a letter written to the Minister of Community and Social Services by Dave Hagerman, President of The Ottawa Federation of Parents' Day Care denouncing proposed funding, through direct grants, to commercial day care centres.

Dear Mr. Sweeney:

Re: Funding for Commercial Day Care Centres

I am writing to present a case for not funding commercial day care centres through direct grants. The case is based on the actual experiences of two day care centres in Ottawa.

### Centre A

In 1978, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton agreed to adjust per diem rates to allow private day care centres to raise the salaries of workers to a level equal to the regional employees. When this increased funding was allocated to a large commercial operator, the funds were not passed onto the workers. In fact, the workers organized into a union and went on strike to force the employer to release the funds for the salary catch-up. The consequence of this increased funding was, therefore, not an

improvement in the service but the opposite. It set in motion a series of events that disrupted the day care centre and was not resolved until the centre was transferred to the non-profit sector through a purchase by the Regional Municipality. Despite a considerable amount of pressure, the strike and the Regional buy out, the workers to this day have yet to receive the salary catch-up funds that were withheld by the owner.

### Centre B

CUPE 2204 recently negotiated an agreement with another local commercial operator, for salaries of \$10,000 (assistant teachers) and \$12,000 (teachers). For many years, these workers earned minimum wage. This is not surprising in itself because commercial operators are notorious for low wages. What is surprising, however, is the commercial operator charges fees that are comparable to other non-profit centres where staff earn significantly higher wages. This operator prefers to divert large amounts of money to pay rent for a building owned by her husband. Therefore, when this operator was faced with a choice of increasing the wages of the staff or increasing the wealth of her family, she chose the latter.

## LETTERS: Organizing Against Commercial Care

The history of these centres illustrates that if the provincial government chooses to fund commercial centres a series of events could be triggered, that will disrupt the entire service for years to come.



These cases are the rule rather than the exception and provide the evidence to suggest that increased funding to commercial day care will not improve the service but will usher in an extended period of conflict between staff and owners. The history of non-profit centres in Ottawa has been the exact opposite. A unity of purpose has been developed between parents and workers which is characterized by respect and co-operation.

Beyond these examples, the funding of commercial centres is not generally popular in the community at large. For example, in a recent survey of the OFPDC, only 8% of parents preferred commercial for profit day

care. Similarly, in a poll commissioned by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, 61% of Canadian prefer more government support for non-profit child care centres. Only 13% said they supported more funding for privately run, for profit centres.

The real issue is not how to increase funding to commercial centres but how to convert commercial centres to non-profit centres.

Funding should be set aside to allow parent groups or municipalities to buy the assets of the commercial centres at a fair and equitable value determined by an independent arbitrator.

By directing increased funding in this area the provincial government would be establishing a strong foundation upon which a future public system can be built. The current proposal to fund commercial centres will simply lead to chaos. I look forward to your response.

## LETTERS: Supporting Non-Profit Daycare

Dear Editor:

### PROFIT vs. NON-PROFIT DAYCARES

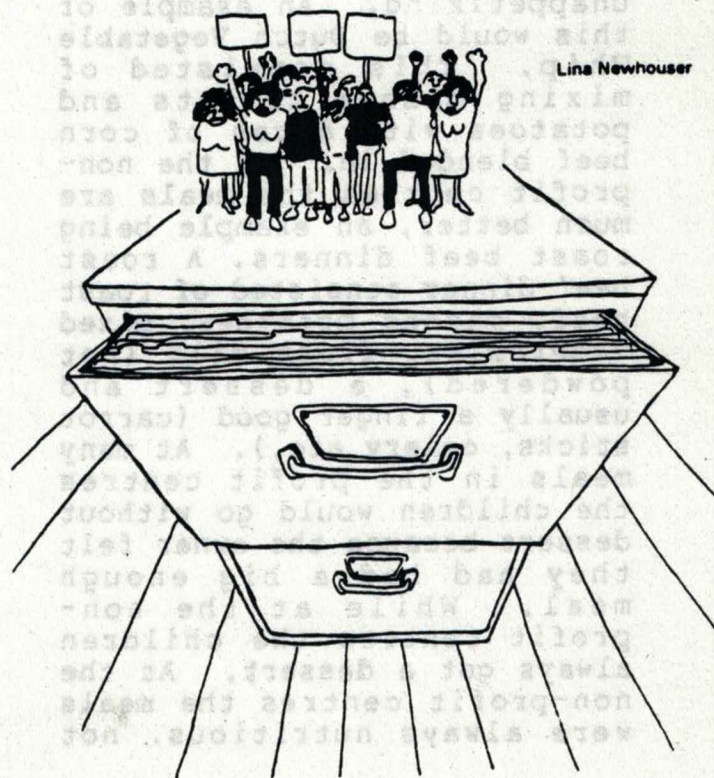
Good day care is essential both to two parent working families and working single parents. It is important for a parent to find a day care with a warm and loving atmosphere and where both parents and child(ren) feel welcome and a part of that day care family.

A government sponsored four-year study found that centres that are either partially or totally funded by the government are different from private day cares that are supported only by parent fees. Centres that are partially or totally funded have better adult per child ratios and offer extra services.(1) Having worked in both profit and non-profit day care, I have found vast differences.

In non-profit day care, I have found the staff feel better about themselves; this reflects positively on the overall atmosphere of the entire centre. The staff are treated as professionals, not as servants for the owner/operator. The one similarity I found between the profit non-profit centres was the friendliness of the staff, although for different reasons. In the non-profit centres everyone feels good about themselves and their job, therefore the staff all work together as a family. The staff at profit centres

develop friendships based on the discouraging problems. In profit day care the staff also develop togetherness because of resentful feelings, due to the lack of many supplies and appreciation. As mentioned above, non-profit day care treats staff as professionals (as they should be). They are not treated like maids; washing floors, scurbbing chairs and walls etc., during times that could be used for planning and preparing programs or activities for the children. General tidying is expected in most jobs, but walls?

The availability of supplies are another difference between profit and non-profit centres. Supplies (art, special snacks etc.) are



Lina Newhouser



## LETTERS: Supporting Non-Profit Daycare

provided when needed and in sufficient amounts for all the children to participate in and enjoy in non-profit centres. While in the profit centres the supplies are usually (most often) late, and supplied in minimal amounts. Special or unusual supplies (dolls, glitter) for special occasions are normally late in arriving, if at all. If supplies were supplied in adequate amounts, it took many many times asking for them to be purchased or a staff member had to purchase them.

The menus in profit and non-profit centres vary greatly. In the profit centres many of the food items are not fit to be eaten; they are either price-reduced or rotten. The meals are often unappetizing. An example of this would be Dutch Vegetable Whip. This consisted of mixing mashed carrots and potatoes with a can of corn beef blended in. In the non-profit centres the meals are much better, an example being roast beef dinners. A roast beef dinner consisted of roast beef, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, fresh milk (not powdered), a dessert and usually a finger good (carrot sticks, celery etc.). At many meals in the profit centres the children would go without dessert because the owner felt they had had a big enough meal. While at the non-profit centres the children always got a dessert. At the non-profit centres the meals were always nutritious, not

liked the profit centres where many of the desserts and snacks were all sugar with no nutritional value.

During the time I have been at a non-profit day care, the number of trips or outings taken has surprised me. Most of the trips were inexpensive but the time involved in planning would have been expected to be used cleaning in a profit centre.

Many day care centres vary in their weekly fee structure. Along with the loving atmosphere, fees are a main concern of parents. Non-profit day care fees are usually less than many of the profit day care fees because no one wants to make money.

Where would you want your child? When in doubt, put the child's welfare first. Should the money from the parent's fees go towards improving the child's surroundings and paying the staff appropriately or for improving the owner's home.



DID YOU HAPPEN TO NOTICE...  
AN INCREASE IN OUR SECURITY?

## LETTERS: Supporting Non-Profit Daycare

Dear Editor:

When I started working in day care, I was an evening student in the ECE program. I found that working for a privately owned and operated day care centre left me with mixed feelings about the ECE field altogether. I guess what really bothered me the most was that the owner/operator knew the day care legislation and didn't comply with it and the variety of inspectors involved didn't enforce it. Overall the children were the losers and the staff were generally frustrated due to the poor working conditions.

To illustrate let me tell you about the program, food, toys/equipment and wages. There was rarely \$\$ for program supplies or for teaching aids. Teachers made many items themselves or purchased them from their own funds. Craft supplies were minimal, when available, and only after many requests. As far as field trips and outings go in the two years I was in the private sector, we went to the zoo twice and each time the parents paid for the trip.

Meal time and snack time was not very impressive. Many snacks consisted of cookies and mixed-up crystal juices which were very high in sugar content. Lunches were uncreative and often ill prepared. One time there were cigarette ashes in the mashed potatoes as the cook was

permitted to smoke in the kitchen. When confronted about this, nothing was done to rectify the situation. The menu was the same every week and always skimpy. By Friday, all the leftovers were made into a concoction defined as Cowboy Stew, which was neither tasty or appealing.

Toys and equipment lacked terribly. In two years, we never did get a sand or water table, nor an unbreakable mirror we had asked for. Educational toys were rarely purchased and, once again, staff ended up making much educational equipment.

Wages were low, benefits non-existent. We did not get paid for lunch hours or any overtime. We were expected not only to provide 'quality' care and a stimulating program but to keep everything in the centre clean and in good repair. This meant cleaning



## Supporting Non-Profit Daycare

washrooms, hallways and mopping floors. We, as staff, were expected to stick rigidly to the day care legislation, but the owner did not and this, of course, was a discouragement for a budding ECE worker. Also the fact that legislation was not being enforced allowed this operator to reap \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ at the expense of the children and staff.

I now work in a non-profit situation and have for over five years. My experience in this sector has been both rewarding and encouraging. I still feel that day care in this country has a long way to go. Public misinformation and ignorance leaves many people believing, as do many private operators, that day care is nothing more than a babysitting service. Professionals in this field are leaving by the hundreds. Why? Poor working conditions, low wages, few, if any, benefits and no recognition. Wake up Canada!

Hi & Lois



# The Case Against Commercial Childcare Children Are Not For Profit

Over the past decade, childcare advocates, women's, religious, and voluntary organizations, labour groups and many others have developed a consensus around a future direction for childcare in Canada.

"... we feel that the Canadian family must have a childcare system which ensures accessibility, quality, affordability, parental involvement, provider direction, good sponsorship, adequate wages and working conditions ...."

Manitoba Home Economics Association

Many of those who have advocated for high quality childcare believe that public funds should not be used to support for-profit childcare.

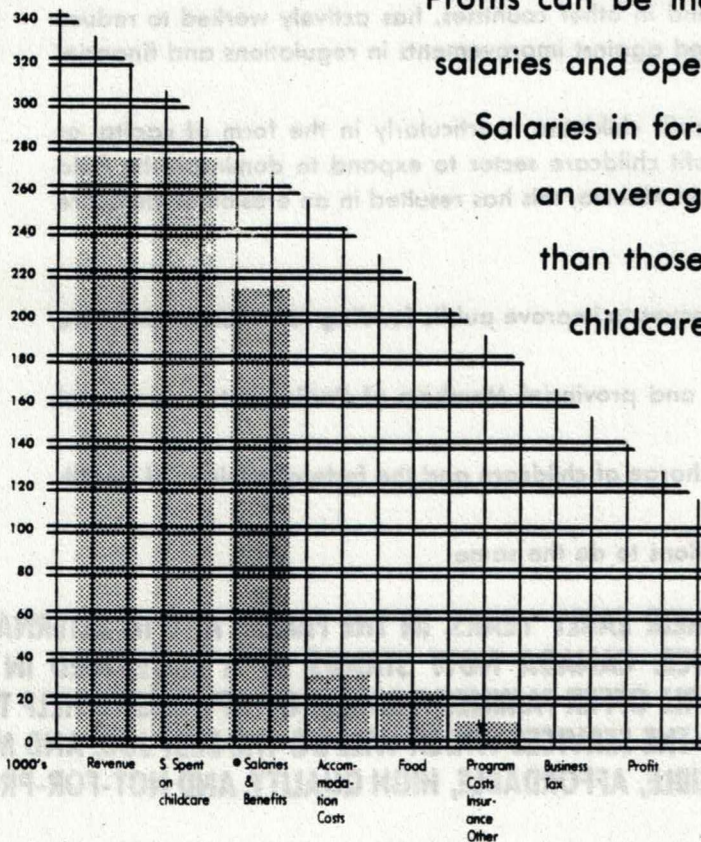
## WHY?

### WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

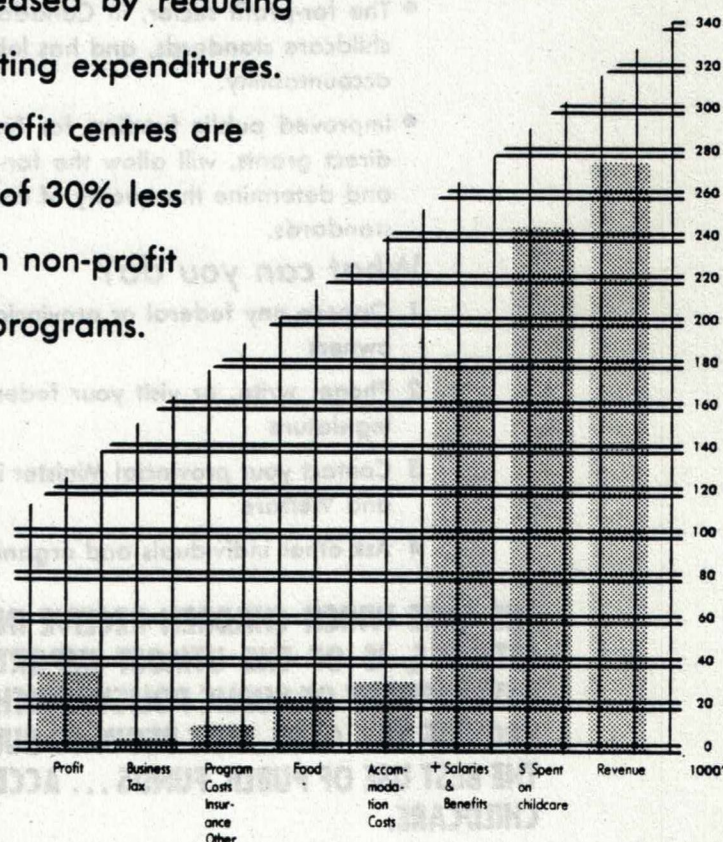
Profits can be increased by reducing

salaries and operating expenditures.

Salaries in for-profit centres are an average of 30% less than those in non-profit childcare programs.



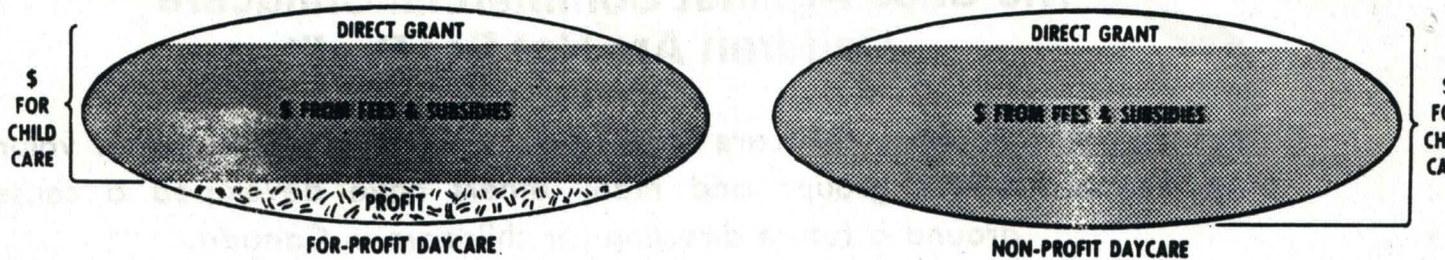
**A NON-PROFIT BUDGET**  
for a centre for 54 children.



**A FOR-PROFIT BUDGET**  
for the same size centre with the same fees.

• Salaries 11 x 15,500 plus support staff and benefits  
+ Salaries 11 x 12,500 plus support staff and benefits  
Other costs based on Metro Toronto guidelines. Fees at \$98.00 per week.

# WHERE WOULD A DIRECT GRANT GO?



In a non-profit program, all income — from parents' fees and public funds — is used for childcare.

In a for-profit program, a portion of income — from parents' fees and public funds — goes to the owners, and is lost to childcare.

Even with a direct grant, in a for-profit program, less money would be spent on the childcare program, and salaries would still be considerably lower than salaries in a non-profit program.

## THIS IS A POOR USE OF PUBLIC DOLLARS AND POOR PUBLIC POLICY.

### *How does a for-profit sector affect the quality of childcare?*

- All evidence indicates that the for-profit sector is much less likely to provide high quality care, and much more likely to provide poor care than the non-profit sector.
- The for-profit sector, in Canada, and in other countries, has actively worked to reduce childcare standards, and has lobbied against improvements in regulations and financial accountability.
- Improved public funding for for-profit childcare, particularly in the form of capital or direct grants, will allow the for-profit childcare sector to expand to dominate the field and determine the quality of care. In Alberta, this has resulted in an erosion of childcare standards.

### *What can you do?*

- 1 Oppose any federal or provincial moves to improve public funding to for-profit childcare owners
- 2 Phone, write, or visit your federal and provincial Members of Parliament or provincial legislature
- 3 Contact your provincial Minister in charge of childcare and the federal Minister of Health and Welfare
- 4 Ask other individuals and organizations to do the same

**THE CARE WHICH CHILDREN RECEIVE IN THEIR EARLY YEARS, IN THE FAMILY AND IN ALTERNATIVE SETTINGS, IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. CANADA NOW STANDS AT A WATERSHED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC POLICY WHICH WILL OFFER FAMILIES A RANGE OF OPTIONS TO HELP THEM PROVIDE THIS CARE. LET'S BEGIN TO BUILD THE SERVICES WHICH WILL DO THE BEST JOB, AND MAKE THE BEST USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS ... ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE, HIGH QUALITY, AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT CHILDCARE.**

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

National Action Committee on the Status of Women ..... 416-922-3246  
Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association ..... 613-594-3196  
Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care ..... 416-535-4188

## Pay Equity Update: Will Daycare Workers Benefit?

The government seems to be in a legislative bog on the pay equity issue. Bill 105, a bill to introduce pay equity for the public sector was introduced in February, 1985 and later amended to cover the broader public sector. However, Bill 154, introduced in the fall to cover employees in the private and broader public sectors cannot move forward until Bill 105 dies because both bills contain contradictory proposals with regard to employees in the broader public sector.

It seems that the most likely scenario is that the current Bill 105 will die; pay equity for private and broader public sector employers will eventually take place under Bill 154; and then new legislation will be introduced to cover pay equity for public sector workers.

In essence, Bill 154 requires employers to pay equal pay for work of equal value between male and female jobs if they are in the same establishment (i.e. employees work for the same employer).

In some day care centres, such as municipal day care centres, this means day care workers will be able to compare their wages to the

wages of the jobs of the outside workers of the municipality. If those jobs are found to be of equal value, then the day care wage should go up to that of the male workers.

Unfortunately, most day care centres are NOT in that situation. There are usually no male-dominated jobs for the day care workers to compare



## Pay Equity Update: Will Daycare Workers Benefit?

themselves to. For example, most non-profit community day care centres are independently run by a board of directors and employ very few or no men. Even though they technically fall under Bill 154 they won't be able to use it.

Ian Scott recognized this problem and in his statement to the House. He said he would direct the Pay Equity Commission "to find a way of allowing such day care centres to avail themselves of the law." The Equal Pay Coalition and other groups lobbying for changes in the bill will be insisting that this provision be written into the legislation.

Other changes being demanded of Bill 154 by the Equal Pay Coalition include:

- A shorter implementation period because in the private sector for small establishments pay equity adjustments do not have to begin for as long as 5 to 6 years after the bill becomes law;

- Fewer exemptions from the bill;
- Role of unions to be strengthened in the bill
- Universal coverage of the bill because it now excludes employers with less than ten employees (many day care centres again).

The Equal Pay Coalition predicts that the NDP will negotiate with the Liberals the conditions under which they will allow Bill 105 to die, allowing Bill 154 to go forward for Second Reading and subsequent amendment sometime in late Spring.

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**Next Issue:** Margot Trevelyan of the Equal Pay Coalition will present a full analysis of the implications of pay equity legislation on day care workers.

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## A.E.C.E.O. Week of the Child 1986

The 8th annual Week of the Child was proclaimed at an official ceremony with Premier David Peterson and Mr. John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services, for October 18 - 25, 1986. This was the first provincial proclamation for the Week from the Ontario government on behalf of the Association for Early Childhood Education, Ontario. The "Week of the Child" is set aside as a time to:

- Renew our commitment to improve the quality of opportunities young children and their families.
- Reflect on the rights and needs of children.
- Renew how well we care for and educate Ontario's future adults, parents and leaders.



The Honorary Chairperson for the Week was Lindsay Weld. Lindsay has been an active member in the AECEO for many years and is presently the area Child Care Co-ordinator in the North East area of the Province, working from the North Bay office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

During the Week of the Child the 25 branches of the AECEO hosted a variety of activities to increase public awareness of Early Childhood Education. To mention a few:

- Hamilton-Wentworth Branch, with honorary patron Lincoln Alexander, sponsored children's concerts and mall displays with a theme of "Cherish our Children".

- Peel Branch hosted a public meeting on toy safety providing opportunity for parents to purchase various toys and crafts.

- North York, Toronto and Scarborough Branches featured a Professional Development Day for Early Childhood Educators, as well as children's entertainment at the Yonge Eglinton Centre.

In order to promote the "Week", the Ministry of Community and Social Services provided funding under the Child Care Incentives program



## A.E.C.E.O. Week of the Child 1986 continued

for the development and distribution of a poster "Our Children, Our Future". Ten thousand posters were distributed throughout Ontario to all licensed preschool programs, libraries, community colleges, area offices of government ministries, child-related organizations, municipalities and public health units.

To launch the Week of the Child the AECEO honoured and recognized two individuals who have made significant contribution toward improving the quality of life for young children. The recipients were honoured at a reception at Ontario Place on October 20, hosted by Mr. John Seeney, Minister of Community and Social Services. Doreen Gordon is presently the Director of Day Care Services for the Regional Municipality of York and has devoted a life time to young children. Lesley Russell is presently the Director of Chedoke-McMaster Hospital Day Care, the President of the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, and spends many hours advocating on behalf of young children and their families.




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Week of the Child 1987-  
October 17 - 24, 1987. Plans  
are now underway, please watch  
for further details.

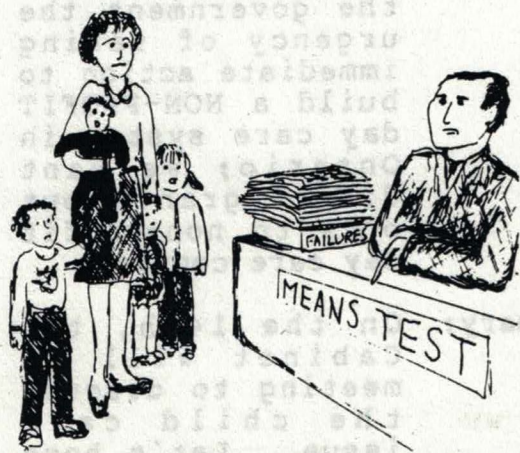
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## Ontario News Round-Up

October: At the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care's annual conference, John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services announced that the White Paper containing new policy options for a comprehensive child care system in Ontario would be forthcoming before Christmas!

November: The First Ministers' Conference in Vancouver discussed women's issues. Child care appeared as a major topic on that agenda. Brian Mulroney told the Ministers: "...I want to state clearly that our commitment to a child care program is real and that we are prepared to allocate substantial resources as our share of this important national initiative."

At the same time, Premier Peterson boasted that Ontario had really made fundamental moves: "We believe that we have to take it from a welfare issue, as it is being treated now, to a public service issue, and that requires not only a major philosophical leap forward but also a financial leap forward as well." To prove that Ontario was, in fact, moving into a new league, he offered: "We will be introducing direct operating grants shortly, as well as income testing that will put substance to our new approach to child care." It should be noted that this statement had not then nor has now been announced in the Legislature at home in Queen's Park. Premier Peterson concluded his remarks with a recommendation that Finance Ministers, Ministers Responsible for Social and Community Services, as well as Ministers Responsible for Women's Issues be invited to a Child Care Conference "to attack this problem together and recognize it for

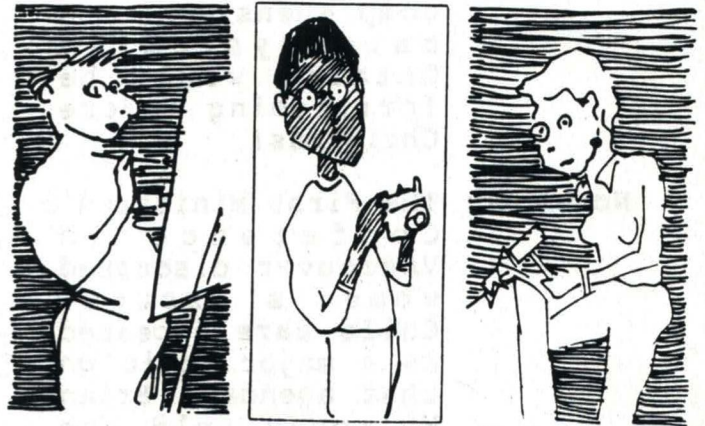


## Ontario News Round-Up

what it is." Peterson recommended a conference within six months and offered Ontario to co-host it.

December: By Christmas, the promised White Paper still had not arrived. Instead, John Sweeney told a meeting of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario that his government would be investigating the possibility of rearranging federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements in order to enable commercial day care operators to receive new funding. For the next two weeks, day care questions echoed around the Legislature. On the 2nd December, Bob Rae asked Sweeney: "Can the minister confirm that what he is saying...is that the Ontario government has basically decided to do nothing until the federal government changes the rules of the game so it can fund for-profit centres as well?" The Minister replied: "No..." But he went on to confirm that "If we could get some agreement from the federal government on how to deal with

the commercial sector...it would be preferable before we make a final decision. If we cannot get such an agreement, then we will move on our own."



So, let's make sure we make him "move on his own", and impress upon the Ontario government the opposition to enhancing the for-profit day care sector in any way. Please telephone your MPP and Premier Peterson and upon the government the urgency of taking immediate action to build a NON-PROFIT day care system in Ontario; we want direct grants but only to non-profit day care centres.

January: On the 14th, the Cabinet will be meeting to discuss the child care issue. Let's hope

## Ontario News Round-Up

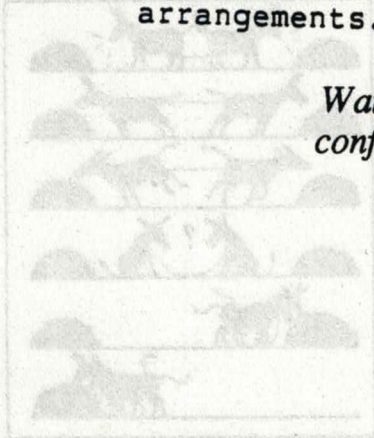
they follow through on their promise for a White Paper, direct grants AND a commitment to no further enhancement of the commercial child care sector.

On the 22nd, Social Service Ministers from across Canada will be meeting in Ottawa to discuss CAP cost-sharing arrangements.



**Look Dick!  
See Jane Organize!**

*Watch for announcements of public press conference meetings prior to this meeting.  
Please attend!*



## Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare NEW OFFICES!



"CALL A MEETING ON WOMEN AFTER WORK & WHAT HAPPENS? ONLY TWO TURN UP. WHERE WERE THEY ALL, I'D LIKE TO KNOW"

We have a new address:

555 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 1Y6  
Tel: (416) 535-4188

Any office furniture or equipment very welcome - it's a bit bare!

## Nicaraguan Daycare Project

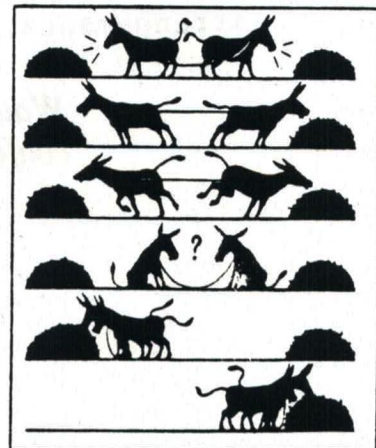
In February of 1986, fifteen trade unionists from Ontario, including a Metro daycare worker from CUPE Local 79, undertook a study tour to El Salvador and Nicaragua in Central America. The purpose of the trip was to investigate, firsthand, the political, social and economic realities faced by workers in these countries. They held many intensive meetings with a broad spectrum of trade unionists, representatives from public organizations and government officials.

Upon returning to Canada they set up LOCALS - Linking Ontario and Central America in Labour Solidarity. LOCALS intends to set up a much needed day care for families in Matagalpa, Nicaragua which will be located in the New Women's Hospital. The initial cost of establishing the centre is \$5,600 and then \$140 per month to feed 80 children. LOCALS is also raising money to pay for the materials and supplies needed for the children. As well as fundraising for the project, the staff who will operate the day care are contributing 5% of their wages.

Why is this project so important? Many of the unions and women's groups there stressed the need for day care centres. Government funds,

which normally would be used to finance social services for the people, have had to be diverted to defence in order to fight the U.S.-backed Contras who are fighting against the Nicaraguan people.

### CO-OPERATION



IS BETTER THAN CONFLICT

Despite the economic and political hardships faced by the country, the Sandinista government has opened 35 day care centres since the revolution in 1979. More day care centres will allow more women the opportunity to work and support their families.

## Nicaraguan Daycare Project continued

At the recent OCBDC conference \$276 was collected in donations from the delegates. LOCALS wishes to express its gratitude to both the Coalition and the delegates for this generous show of support. Anyone wishing to make a donation should make cheques payable to "Nicaraguan Daycare Project" and send to:

If you would like someone to come out to speak to your community group, day care, or Coalition on the Nicaraguan Daycare Project, please contact:

Ontario Coalition for Better  
Day Care  
555 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ont. M5S 1Y6  
Telephone: 535-4188



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Submitted by Eden Guidroz  
President CUPE Local 2484

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## Daycare Development in Ontario

The Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care is attempting to keep an inventory of new day care programs opening in Ontario. If you have a new day care centre, drop-in program, resource centre or private home day care agency in your community, please let us know about it.

**Waterpark Place:** New workplace day care in heart of downtown Toronto in the Reed Steinhouse tower, a multi-million development by Campeau Corp. The day care centre cost \$375,000 to construct. Yearly maintenance expenses of \$50,000 and free rent for 25 years are borne by Campeau in exchange for a density transfer that allows the developer to add more space than zoning regulations would normally allow.

**Others Toronto Centres In Progress:** Cadillac Fairview Corp in the second phase of the Eaton Centre; York Hannover Developments Ltd. in the World Trade Centre, the CBC at King Street West and the Canada Life Assurance near University Ave. and Queen Street. Also on the horizon is a garment workers' day care at 511 Richmond Street West.

**Lakehead:** The Schoolhouse Playcare Centre - the first workplace day care in Northwestern Ontario. Originally designed to meet the formal day care needs of Lakehead Board of Education employees, the program was extended during its initial stages to include the general

public. Housed at St. James Public School, it accommodates 54 full and part-time children at a cost of \$20 per day.

**Cambridge:** 45 more day care spaces will be created in Cambridge early next year when the YWCA gets involved in day care provision. The day care is a shift in emphasis for the YWCA and will accommodate toddlers and preschoolers. The Y is also trying to interest local employers to buy spaces in the proposed day care centre. One large Cambridge employer, Allen Bradley Canada Ltd. is talking to Y officials about this possibility. Out of the 7 day care centres in Cambridge, most have a waiting list, most are in downtown Galt.

### North Bay

In response to community need for before and after school programs, the North Bay Family YMCA in conjunction with the Nipissing Board of Education has opened a new First Base program designed for children between 4 and 10 years old at Silver Birches Senior Public School. If the program is successful, new programs will be set up in every school with available space.

**Ottawa:** The Ontario government will be providing \$375,000 towards the construction of a new daycare centre in southeast Ottawa - the first time in more than a decade provincial funding has been available for such a project.

## OCBDC Moving Forward Conference

On October 24-27, 1986, the Ontario Coalition held its annual conference and lobby day in Toronto. The Conference "Moving Forward" kicked off on the Friday evening with three presentations focusing on our vision of future child care. Sheila Kamerman, Ruth Rose Lizee and Jamie Kass enlightened us with their visions. On the Saturday, Minister of Community and Social Services, John Sweeney addressed the 400 participants about current government policy on child care followed by a choice of twenty different workshops.

On the Sunday, we had the opportunity of hearing Helen Penn from Scotland talking about new initiatives in Britain and Elizabeth Beckett discuss legal issues facing early childhood educators. Coalition Council members had a fruitful business meeting and elected a new Executive. In the evening, we enjoyed good food and music at the Coalition's banquet in downtown Toronto.

### Lobby Day

Things have come a long way since the Seventies. Now, we are able to have our day care demonstrations INSIDE Queen's Park, with the politicians in front of us responding to our questions

and concerns. In the old days, we would rally OUTSIDE Queen's Park, hear speeches and shout slogans, but essentially it all fell on deaf ears. This is perhaps the key indicator of how far we've come in a few years.

So on October 27th, 400 people crammed into the Ontario Room at Queen's Park to hear each of the three political parties respond to questions about child care issues from members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care.

It was a bear pit session. Each party was asked about the key issues and what action they would be taking inside the legislature to





## OCBDC Moving Forward Conference

transform day care from a welfare service to a public service. The NDP, as always, gave their full support and assured us that they would regularly be raising questions in the House. The surprise this year was the Tories: They seem to have taken a 100 degree turn on every policy position they ever held in the past. Their policy to force day care centres to pay full costs, and, therefore, raise the fee to the parents, force many children out of the centres and ultimately close down centres, was their chief focus of concern. The direct grant which they had adamantly denied us for so long has now become one of their major platforms.

The Liberals were defensive. A year ago they promised the day care community a review of child care policy resulting in far-reaching legislation to transform the current day care system into a comprehensive system with a lot more direct funding. Despite promises all year, we have yet to hear anything from them. In an attempt to offset the antagonism, John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services, announced "Hardship Grants" to municipal day cares threatened with subsidy cutbacks.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare has now learned how to put and keep the pressure on the government. It has been a matter of consistently organizing around

every possible issue and from various angles for the last five years. Our victories have been transparent. Although we haven't won our demands yet, certain gains have resulted. We have won a salary grant from the City of Toronto, setting the precedent and shaking up the whole system of daycare in Metro Toronto - the largest day care provider in Canada. We have secured a 379% increase in expenditures for day care since 1978; and we have stepped up the propaganda war through the press.

Hopefully we will shortly see the announcement of a direct grant for day care from the provincial government. It will be a fraction of what is needed and will not be accompanied by planning mechanisms to build a universal day care system. It has taken us 5 years of vigilant campaigning to win even this, but it will mean more access for more parents and the possibility of growth in the sector.

IF I'M YOUR  
BETTER HALF  
WHY'S MY PAY  
A QUARTER THE  
SIZE OF YOURS?..



## Private Home Daycare Conference

The Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario held its fourth annual conference in Ottawa on October 22-24, 1986. The conference was very successful as over 180 participants from across the Province participated in a variety of workshops ranging from communication skills to safety requirements, strategies for recruiting providers, child abuse issues, effects of separation and divorce, language development, legal liability, and so on.

A reception for the Association was held on Parliament Hill. Participants had an opportunity to meet and informally discuss issues with members of the Federal Parliamentary Task Force on Child Care as well as many other Members of Parliament.

The conference title was Present Realities, Future Visions. John Pepin, the President of the Association, opened the conference with an overview of the present realities and challenges we face. He discussed the changing family and society and the need for a universal, accessible and affordable child care system. He looked at a number of problems specific to private home day care including issues related to quality, staff-provider-child ratios, poor salaries and low provider payments. He talked about the anxiety that exists in the field, about the future of private home day care and the need to review the Day Nurseries Act.

The next day, the Honourable John Sweeney addressed the conference focussing on future visions. He stated that the government is looking at new approaches to day care and that its new policies will reflect this. His view was that private home day care is an essential part of Ontario's child care services. He announced that the Province would be paying providers on an enrolment basis as of January 1, 1987 and that there would soon be a fundamental review of private home day care.

The Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario also held its fourth annual meeting during the conference. The Association reported on its many activities during the year as well as sought member's advice on a number of issues facing the Association. Elected to the Board of Directors were the following: Marion Brady (Region of Durham); Andrena Cumella (Toronto); Janice Georgy (Ottawa); Linda Hodgins (Pickering); Mary Lou James (Kanata); Linda Kadechuk (London); Sandra Livingston (Thunder Bay); Lesley Max (Region of Peel); John Pepin (Toronto); Karen Scheremeta (Halton); Linda Skinner (Waterloo); and Maria Williamson (Hamilton).

John Pepin



## New Executive Members Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare

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At the annual conference of the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care, a new Executive was formed. We would like to introduce you to our new Executive. Our executive comprises four representatives from province-wide organizations, four representatives from local coalition groups and one individual elected from the five individuals elected to the Council at the annual meeting.

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David Hagerman, Individual Council representative. Administrative Coordinator of Glebe Parents Day Care; President of Ottawa Federation of Parents' Day Care, a development group for parent-staff day care cooperatives in Ottawa.

Brigid Kemp, Representative from Congress of Canadian Women and Family Worker at Victoria Day Care Services in Toronto.

Pierre Lalonde, Executive Assistant, Ontario Teachers Federation.

Beth Reynett, Council representative from the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Laurel Rothman, Action Day Care. Daycare Coordinator, City of Toronto and daycare parent.

Lesley Russell, President. Representative from Hamilton. Executive Director of the Chedoke-McMaster Hospital Day Care in Hamilton, Board member of the Association for Early Childhood Education.

Ruth Wells, President, Thunder Bay Advocates for Quality Child Care and long-time day care advocate.

Verla Wilson, Representative from the Day Care Coalition of Metropolitan Toronto. Currently teaching at Huron Superfriends Day Care, Verla is studying at the Institute of Child Study, has taught in schoolage programs and school system in Ontario and B.C.

Windsor Coalition representative still to be appointed.

## Paying for Private Home Daycare

On January 1, 1987, the province will be introducing enrollment payments vs. attendance payments to private home day care providers at a cost of about \$1.6 million in 1987. John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services made this announcement at the Private Home Day Care Conference on October 24 and hopes it will increase providers' incomes by 15%. The attendance based fee had long been a sore in the providers' side. Previously providers were never paid when children were absent because of illness or vacations.



## Transitional Grants Announced at Conference

After a long struggle by many municipalities across the province to maintain a government subsidy, (known as the indirect subsidy because it was never an official government policy) John Sweeney, Minister of Community and Social Services announced his government's intention to introduce "hardship grants" as a transitional measure to replace the indirect subsidy starting January 1, 1987.

Removal of the subsidy, which had kept day care fees at an affordable level, would have meant that average costs for a day care space in municipal centres would have risen to \$30 per day in some areas. Higher fees would mean many families would be forced to withdraw their children from care, leading to possible closure of centres.



## Province Holds Metro Toronto to 4%

Negotiations between Metro Toronto Council and the Province of Ontario over the 1986 budget have broken down. Every year, each municipality decides how much day care service it wants to provide; the province also decides how much of the provincial tax dollars will be spent on day care. Then the municipalities and the provincial government sit down and negotiate.

It is now well known that some municipalities are more willing to spend big dollars on day care than others - both with respect to number of subsidized day care spaces and with respect to increases in the budget. Metro Toronto is one such example. Metro has made a commitment to raise day care workers' salaries. This,

## Metro Toronto

however, cannot be done without budget increases beyond the 4% cost-of-living increase. The provincial government has made commitments to improve low-paid women's salaries AND day care workers' salaries. Yet, it refuses to meet the budget requests of enlightened municipalities who are trying to do just that! Furthermore, the provincial government has always been under-expended on its budget allocations for day care.

The amount is actually small. Of the \$54.7 million requested by Metro Toronto for day care, the province is refusing an expenditure of \$860,000 representing a budget shortfall of 1.5%. To the provincial government this is peanuts. But to day care centres and day care staff it will have huge ramifications. Without the extra money, day care workers who were expecting salary increases in 1986 will not receive them; it also means that they will be entering 1987 with lower salaries to build on. In centres where contracts for salary increases above 4% have already been negotiated, centres will have to raise fees to cover the difference, or they will have to start laying staff off.

On the morning of the 22nd January, Metro Community Services and Housing Committee will hear depositions from the day care community in Metro Toronto explaining what the impact will be on their centres. To add your name to this list of speakers, please call the Metro Day Care Coalition at 416-535-4188 and attend at City Hall.

**Ben Wicks**



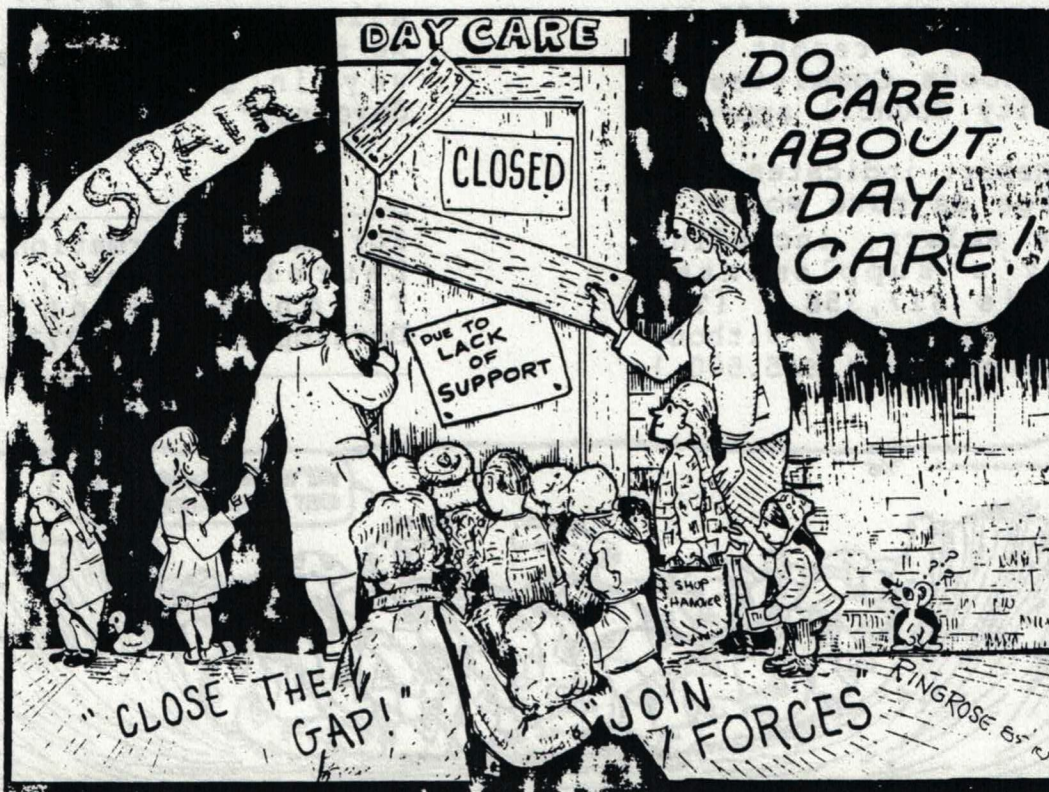
"She's gone to a protest meeting for more day-care centres."

## Kitchener-Waterloo

Day care advocates in Kitchener-Waterloo region have been trying to persuade the provincial government to raise the maximum age to 12 from 10 for children to get subsidized day care. The province currently only pays until the child's tenth birthday. This has long been a bone of contention for Coalition members.

On Friday, October 3, local providers and parents met with John Sweeney to ask him to consider raising the maximum age. Mary Ann Wasilka of Kitchener, President of Providers and Children Together said "I feel cutting them off (on the 10th birthday) is a flaw in the system." She thinks that

children under 12 are too young to be left alone. Sweeney said it was unlikely he'd change the rule "Whatever new money I can get," he said "will go towards adding more day care spaces throughout the province and paying higher wages to daycare workers - not to raising the age limit."



## Elliott Lake

Elliott Lake Council is investigating the availability of provincial funding for French language day care programs within an existing day care facility in response to a recent day care needs survey which indicated a substantial demand for bilingual day care. Plans are now going ahead for Elliott Lake Day Care Centre to set up a separate francophone program within the existing day care centre for 8 children. The only drawback could be lack of start-up funds to get the program off the ground.

## Toronto

The average daycare salary in the City of Toronto has increased 22% in 1985-86, according to a report that Neighbourhoods Committee of Toronto City Council approved recently.

The Report indicates that the average daycare worker's full-time salary, including the City's supplemental portion, is \$17,358. (The average daycare salary without the direct grant is \$15,500.)

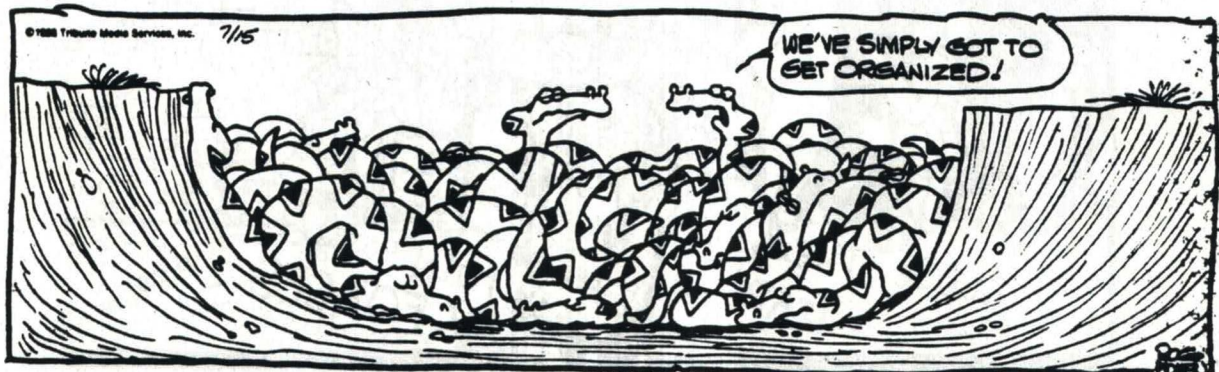
Councillor Rowlands, also a member of the Daycare Grant Committee, adds, "This program is a sound investment in our children's future. We want to encourage families to remain in the City and to do that we need to assist them in meeting their daycare needs. We will be looking to senior levels of government to help provide this financial support and to ensure that daycare workers in all areas of Metro earn a fair living wage."

Councillor Joanne Campbell, Chairperson of the Daycare Grant Committee comments, "The City Grant has improved the wages and working conditions for more than 600 workers in the field of early childhood education, while helping to stabilize fees for the parents of more than 4000 children. Staff in 100 licenced non-profit daycare centres will benefit if Council approves the allocation of \$2.1 million. We're proud to be leading the way in supporting quality daycare."

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For more information, contact Laurel Rothman, City of Toronto Planning and Development, 392-7732

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# CALENDAR

January 17, 1987  
"Day Care Travelling  
Seminars", Kingston Ontario.  
For details: Pauline Carter,  
OMSSA, Box 40, Inglewood, Ont.  
LON 1K0

January 26 Provincial and  
Federal Social Service  
Ministers will be meeting in  
Ottawa to discuss federal-  
provincial issues. On the  
agenda is day care and CAP.  
In Toronto a press conference  
will be organized in the week  
of the 19th. Watch out for  
the precise date and time.  
AND PLEASE ATTEND!

February 6, 7 & 8: Women and  
the State: A Conference for  
Feminist Activists, 252 Bloor  
Street West, Toronto.  
For further information  
contact Dept of Sociology,  
OISE, 252 Bloor Street West,  
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1Y6

February Budget: Michael  
Wilson will be delivering his  
budget in February. Rumour  
has it that more child care  
tax deductions/credits are on  
the agenda. Write to him  
insisting the money go to  
direct service for child care.

May 24-29, 1987 "Sharing  
Through Play - Toy Libraries  
Around the World". For  
information contact:  
Ontario Institute for Studies  
in Education, 252 Bloor Street  
West, Toronto, Ont, M5S 1V6  
(416) 923-6641

June 10-13, 1987  
"Growing Together"  
Windsor, Ontario.  
Annual AECEO Conference  
For details:  
Association for Early  
Childhood Education, Ontario  
266 Adelaide Street West,  
Suite 3, Toronto, Ont. M6H 1X6  
(416) 598-1205

November 6-9, 1987. Fifth  
Annual Conference and Lobby of  
Ontario Coalition for Better  
Day Care. Location and agenda  
to follow shortly.

## URGENT:

Don't forget OCBDC Council  
Meeting, Sunday, January 25  
1987, 11 a.m. 2nd Floor,  
Education Centre, 155 College  
Street, Toronto, Ont.  
COME AND HEAR LATEST FROM  
MINISTRY.





## YES!

*I want to join the Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare and receive the Newsletter!  
Enclosed is my membership fee.*

**Fee:** Individuals..... \$10  
Daycare Centres & local Organizations..... \$20  
(Provincial Organizations are requested to contact us for membership fees)

**Donation:** Enclosed is a donation of: \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ **Postal Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Return to:** Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare,  
555 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1Y6