

THE CAW
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AND
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CHILDCARE

CAW  TCA
CANADA

*Produced by the
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SISTERHOOD
—
SOLIDARITÉ



"Over the past three decades, one of the most important demographic developments has been the rapid entry of women into the labour force. In 1961, only 30% of women were in the paid labour force compared to 60% in 1991."

*Statistics Canada,
Labour Force Statistics 1993.*

"Of all children who required care in 1988 while their parents worked, only 14% of children under age 6, and 7% of children age 6-9 were cared for in a licensed centre or regulated family home."

*Donna Lero et al.
Canadian National Child Care Study.
Statistics Canada, July 1992.*

"Childcare is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers."

Judge Rosalie Abella, 1984

"When our 6-year old is sick, I use my sick days to be with her. When I'm sick, I go to work."

Local 2213 member



Childcare is about working conditions:

Parents must be able to go to work assured that their children are safe and happy.

Childcare is about our future:

Children who are cared for and loved today will create a peaceful and prosperous future. We are all responsible for the well-being of children.

High quality care must not become only a privilege for the children of wealthy parents nor a welfare measure for the children of low-income parents. High quality care should be available to all children. Just as Canadians have established excellent medicare and pension programs, it makes sense for our government to build a comprehensive childcare system that meets the needs of Canadian families.



CHILDCARE IS A UNION ISSUE

For a variety of reasons, women's earnings have become essential to the economic well-being of many Canadian families. If women in dual-earner families stopped working, the number of low income families would more than double to one million families.

Through paid employment, women have not only provided financial support for their families, but women have also gained greater equality with men. Because paid employment is extremely important to women, they are joining the union with energy and commitment.

LACK OF CHILDCARE SERVICES

With more women employed in the labour force, there is a growing need for childcare. Social services have not met that need, and the shortage of quality, affordable childcare services has reached a crisis in Canada:

- only one licensed childcare space is available for every eight pre-school children requiring care
- even if licensed care were available, many working parents could not afford the yearly cost of \$10,000

"Expansion in child care spaces has slowed to the lowest point in ten years. Between 1990 and 1991, the number of regulated spaces grew by only 2.95%, the lowest percentage since 1978."

*National Action Committee on
the Status of Women, July 1993.*



WHAT CAW MEMBERS HAVE ACHIEVED IN CHILDCARE

Local 1325, Stratford

- In 1983, workers at Stratford, Ontario, Local 1325, identified childcare as a major problem. This small local of 1,000 workers went on to negotiate the first private-sector childcare fund in Canada: two cents per worker hour.

Big Three Auto Companies

- Encouraged by the Stratford workers, the CAW bargained a childcare fund at the Big Three in 1987. The half cent per worked hour created the largest fund ever negotiated for childcare in the private sector. Funding was increased to one cent in 1990 negotiations and then to 4.5 cents in 1993.
- The CAW Labour Community Child Care Centre opened in Windsor in 1990 and offers high quality care to children whose parents work shifts. In addition, the centre operates an in-home care program with trained caregivers.
- There are now plans to expand services into Oshawa and other communities with CAW workers at the Big Three auto manufacturers.

Windsor Casino

- In their first collective agreement, CAW Local 444 members at the Windsor Casino negotiated the creation of an off-site childcare centre and funding of 2 cents per worker hour beginning in 1997.



Port Elgin CAW Family Education Centre

- The CAW has designed an exciting model for on-site childcare at its Family Education Centre in Port Elgin. Caregivers, trained in child development, provide a stimulating, creative environment for the children. In recognition of their valuable skills, the caregivers are paid fair wages.

3M London, Ontario

- CAW members have negotiated the "week-end worker" where a member can work 12 hours each Saturday and Sunday and be paid for a full work week with benefits, holidays and vacations.

Other Actions

- The CAW provides childcare at national functions so all members can participate in union affairs.
- Representatives of the CAW have presented briefs to provincial and federal governments supporting universally accessible, non-profit, quality childcare.
- The CAW is an active member of the Canadian Daycare Advocacy Association and the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare – organizations dedicated to the principle of universal childcare.

The CAW has always protected the rights of our members in the workplace. We also take pride in seeking a better society for workers and their families. As CAW members and Canadian workers, we have an important voice in shaping the social values of our country.



WHAT YOUR LOCAL CAN DO

- Make members aware that childcare is available at CAW functions.
- Make childcare a bargaining demand. Conduct a survey to determine the needs of the members and then develop an appropriate provision, for example:
 - reduced work time,
 - paid parental leave,
 - childcare spaces, or,
 - time off to be with sick children.
- Find out what resources are available from the municipal, provincial, and federal government to assist your local with childcare.
- Support the efforts of other organizations to fight for a national childcare program. Participate in childcare coalitions, present briefs, and lobby the government.
- Educate the membership on their social responsibility to care for children.
- Contact the Canadian Day Care Advocacy (CDCAA) for more information at 323 Chapel St., Ottawa, Ont. K1N 7Z2, (613) 594-3196.



SISTERHOOD
SOLIDARITÉ

The bilingual symbol above was created especially for CAW women's programs. The clasped hands with the bread and roses are a traditional sign of labour solidarity, here symbolizing the optimism and energy of union sisterhood.