

FACT SHEET
THE STATUS OF DAY CARE IN THE OTTAWA-CARLETON REGION

FACT: There are now over 1,000 children on waiting lists in the Ottawa-Carleton Region. Day care spaces are declining relative to increases in the population. The Regional Government has decided not to expand day care in 1979.

FACT: Day Care is already too costly for the large percentage of the population not eligible for subsidization. In 1978 it cost between \$3,640 and \$6,118 per year to place one infant in day care. The annual rates for pre-schoolers ranged between \$2,093 and \$3,793. The Regional Government has decided to raise the per diems for infants and pre-schoolers in Regional Day Care Centres in 1979. The minimum fee for subsidized parents will also be increased effective September, 1979.

FACT: Day Care workers in purchase-of-service community day care centres are earning poverty level wages. They are all dissatisfied with their wages. Average annual salaries in some centres are only \$8,000. Community day care employees now earn 30 to 56 per cent less than the average salary in the Ottawa-Hull area. They also earn \$2,000 to \$5,000 less than employees doing the same work in municipal centres. These employees, members of CUPE Local 2204, want to eliminate this wage gap over a three year period. This modest call for equity was approved by the Regional Ad Hoc Committee on Day Care Services. The Regional Government has decided not to provide the required funding. Day Care workers will fall further behind.

FACT: Governments are reluctant to recognize that day care is a legitimate and essential social responsibility of the government. Day Care funding has always been inadequate. The Ottawa Consumer Price Index has increased 8.6 per cent during the past year. The Provincial government has decided to hold down the day care services budget to a 5 per cent increase. Although not restrained from providing additional funding, the Regional Government decided to implement merely a 6 per cent increase (or a maximum of 7.25 per cent where "warranted"). Both levels of government are blaming each other and won't accept any responsibility. These "increases" represent a cut-back to existing programs. Children, parents and day care workers will all lose out.

FACT: The Ottawa-Carleton area needs more regional and community day care centres. The Regional Government has decided to lease a municipal day centre to a community centre were this "would reduce costs". The cost saving would result from the fact that community day care employees would be expected to subsidize day care by accepting low wages. Both groups of employees would be worse off, to say nothing of parents and children denied additional day care spaces.

FACT: Good quality day care is dependent on a proper ratio of day care teachers to children. The minimum ratio is defined in the Provincial Day Nurseries Act. The Regional Government has decided to try and reduced staff and/or alter the balance of teachers and assistant teachers in municipal day care centres to reduce costs. The quality of day care will deteriorate.

FACT: Some politicians claim that day care is already costing the government too much money. However, in 1978 it cost the same to keep a child in the Ottawa Board of Education for 188 days of the year from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. as it did to keep a child in a group day care centre for 250 days of the year from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and to also provide a daily hot meal and two snacks. And yet the Regional Government has decided to cut-back on day care.

Fact: This is the International Year of the Child.

TELL THE POLITICIANS:
PLAY FAIR WITH DAY CARE

TELL THEM:

- Stop cutting back on financing of day care
- Stop increasing fees for parents
- Stop closing municipal day care facilities
- Stop undermining the quality of day care by using less teachers
- Stop decreasing the number of spaces for children
- Stop expecting day care workers to accept inferior wages and conditions

TELL THEM:

At a Rally for Fair Day Care. Wednesday, August 8 at 5:30 p.m. Outside City Hall - Green Island Park. Bring the whole family and have a picnic on the City Hall lawn.

SPONSORED BY:

The Ottawa-Carleton Day Care Association
The United Day Care and Parents' Association
The Canadian Union of Public Employees, Locals 2204 and 503