

CHILD CARE CHALLENGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE

FEATURE ISSUE



**Kids
not cash**



...was the slogan for the joint campaign of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Ontario Federation of Labour in the spring of 1987: a campaign that took members to 13 communities in Ontario where over 170 groups and individuals discussed the need for non-profit child care in Ontario; where front line people - parents, child care providers, trade unionists - spoke out against public funding for commercial centres. (The "Kids Not Cash" Campaign Report is available from the OCBC office)

The slogan sent a strong message to the Liberal government, and resulted in commercial child care centres receiving only 50% of the Direct Operating Grant..

Dig out your buttons! Unfortunately, the debate is on again!

continued...

Towards a High Quality Child Care System

Kids Not Cash *continued from page one...*

When the Coalition was established in 1981, our goal was the establishment of a comprehensive, high quality, universally accessible, non-profit, publicly-funded child care system in Ontario. We remain committed to achieving that goal.

The Ontario New Democratic Party has shared this vision for many years, insisting that a high-quality child care system must be non-profit

and that commercial child care should not receive public funds.

When they were elected to govern in September 1990, we thought it was safe to pack up the ``Kids not Cash'' buttons.

When Zanana Akande, Minister of Community and Social Services, announced on January 31, 1991, that the \$30 million down payment on pay equity for child care staff would go to the non-profit sector only, we thought we could finally send those buttons to the archives.

Not so. Commercial operators are calling the recent announcement discrimination against themselves and their workers. They want the government to fund the pay equity adjustments they will have to make. They say that otherwise they will have to raise parent fees to pay for these adjustments. What they don't say is that they are business people, running child care businesses and making a profit.

We say that all child care workers deserve pay equity. We say that as a business, commercial child care centres should fund pay equity adjustments from their general revenues, just as all businesses are required to do. We would be outraged if Loblaws asked the government to give them money for pay equity. We should be equally outraged by commercial child care operators who are doing just that.

Commercial operators also say that there is no money to be made in child care. They say they are not in the business to make money, but because they care about children.

We say, if that is true, then convert the operation to non-profit.

We see the ``down payment'' on pay equity to the non-profit sector only as a positive step towards building a high quality child care system in Ontario.

NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR!!

We are very pleased to announce that Kerry McCuaig has accepted the position of Executive Director. She will be starting her new position on April 29th.

**WELCOME
ABOARD,
KERRY!**

THE CHALLENGE

Romi Mainolfi, Martha Friendly, Janet Davis, Research and Writing
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Why Commercial Child Care Is Not the Way To Go

WHAT THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ONTARIO SAID:

1990: We firmly oppose for-profit childcare institutions. *Ontario NDP. A new Democratic Party Philosophy of Elementary and Secondary Education.*

1988: I've been pressing the Ontario government to offer incentives to for-profit centres to convert to non-profit centres with community boards and parent participation. Substantial dollars are going into child care. We might as well do it right. *Campaign literature. Richard Allen.*

1987: Commercially-operated child care centres are no different from other businesses: they are in business to make money...New Democrats believe that...more money should be spent on child care, but only for non-profit services...Commercial centres should be offered conditional grants and consultative assistance to encourage them to convert to non-profit status. *Report of the Select Committee on Health., Dissenting Opinion by New Democratic Party Members Dave Cooke and Richard Johnston.*

1987: Ontario must say...loud and clear... that we do not want public money to be fed to profit-making childcare corporations. *Evelyn Gigantes. Press Release.*

1987: ...many day care centres run for a profit offer a standard of care that is not acceptable.. why is his (Mr. Sweeney's) government still so determined to see that for-profit centres get a handle on government money? *Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Bob Rae.*

1984: Child care funds would be directed only to government-operated and non-profit community-controlled centres and regulated home providers. *New Democratic Party of Ontario. Child Care Program*

1980: The NDP child care programme should cover the following...that child funds be directed only to non-profit community-controlled child care centres and those operated by government. *New Democratic Party of Ontario Resolutions. Party Convention.*

WHAT OTHER GROUPS SAID:

Ministry of Community and Social Services. (Peterson government): The government is determined that future child care growth will be in the non-profit sector. Expansion of this sector is consistent with the move toward recognizing child care as a basic public service. *New Directions for Child Care. (1987).*

National Council of Welfare: Profits are made by keeping costs down - paying low salaries to caregivers, raising staff-child ratios or compromising health, safety or nutritional standards - all of which hurt children...

Child Care: A Better Alternative. (1988).

Canadian Union of Public Employees: ... the bill extends funds to commercial child care facilities, despite overwhelming evidence that because of the very nature of the service, profit can be earned only at the expense of critically important prerequisites for the provision of quality child care. *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-144. (1988).*

Ontario Federation of Labour:

We recommend...that...no new child care moneys be available to commercial operators and that the government introduce a program for conversion to non-profit status for those who wish to continue to receive public money... *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Legislative Committee on Bill C-144. (1988)*

Ontario Federation of Labour: The idea of governments offering grants to private operators runs counter to the objectives of virtually all child care advocates...just as we do not fund private schools, neither should we continue to fund private child care with public dollars. *Kids not Cash: Non-profit child care. (1987).*

National Action Committee on the Status of Women: Public funds should not subsidize commercial operators. *Child Care. (1987).*

National Anti-Poverty Organization: ... we urge the government to...guarantee that the investment of public dollars will be used to increase the number of quality of child care spaces and not to add to private profits... *Submission to the Legislative Committee on Bill C-144. (1988).*

Towards a High Quality Child Care System

THE COALITION IS CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO:

• **DIRECT ALL NEW CHILD CARE FUNDING TO THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR ONLY;**

• **ALLOCATE CAPITAL MONEY FOR PLANNED DEVELOPMENT OF NEW NON-PROFIT SERVICES;**

• **IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO CONVERT COMMERCIAL CHILD CARE SPACES TO NON-PROFIT.**

- 1 Offer retroactive pay equity grants to commercial operators who convert to non-profit;
- 2 Establish a conversion team in every area of the province to assist commercial operators, staff and parents to establish alternative non-profit services;
- 3 Allocate start-up funds to assist new non-profit programs with the purchase of toys, furnishings and equipment from commercial operators who leave the field;
- 4 Allocate already budgeted major capital funds to establish new centres where commercial programs do not convert or rent facilities to new non-profit centres.

• **ENSURE LEGISLATED PAY EQUITY FOR ALL CHILD CARE WORKERS**

- 1 Amend the Pay Equity legislation to provide a mechanism for all workers to achieve pay equity;
- 2 Provide information and assistance to commercial child care staff to ensure that pay equity plans are posted and adjustments paid by owners.

These steps are necessary to create a HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE SYSTEM for all children and families in Ontario.

Show your support for the Coalition's recommendations.

Call or write: **Honourable Zanana Akande
Minister of Community and Social Services
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ont M7A 1A2
Ph. 965-2341 Fax 324-4671**

Why Commercial Child Care Is Not the Way To Go

Pay Equity for Child Care Workers

Q. Are child care workers covered by the Pay Equity Legislation?

A. Yes, all workers in both the non-profit and commercial sectors are considered to be part of the broader public sector and covered by the Pay Equity Act, if they receive provincial funding. (All centres except commercial centres established since January 1988, receive the Direct Operating Grant DOG)

Q. Why have they not received adjustments?

A. Like other women working in all-female establishments, child care staff do not have male comparators in their workplaces. Without comparators, adjustments aren't required.

Q. What is the government doing about this?

A. The Ministry of Labour has released an information paper entitled, **Extending Pay Equity by Proportional Value and Proxy Comparisons**. The paper recommends methods that will provide comparators for child care workers. We understand that legislative amendments to implement these proposals will be introduced by 1992. After this, all women in child care will be entitled to pay equity adjustments.

Q. What is the "down-payment" on pay equity?

A. On January 31, 1991, Minister of Community and Social Services, Zanana Akande announced \$30 million for a salary enhancement grant of about \$2,000 per staff person in non-profit child care centres, and \$1,000 for home day care providers. This funding was implemented in anticipation of the impending pay equity amendments.

Q. Why did the "down payment" not go to the commercial sector?

A. The government has stated that the funds did not go to the commercial sector because it prefers non-profit care.

There are real reasons why the government should prefer non-profit care -- quality, accountability of public funds, parental involvement, the future of the child care system in Ontario -- to name only a few.

Q. Will workers in the commercial centres ever get a pay equity adjustment?

A. Of course, but the government shouldn't pay for it. When the Pay Equity Act is amended, a proxy-comparator method will be available to enable all child care workers to find appropriate comparators in other workplaces. Pay equity plans with appropriate adjustments will be required in all child care centres. Commercial operators will have to draw on profits to pay the adjustments.

Salaries in commercial centres have historically been significantly lower than those in the non-profit and public sectors. They have been making profits on the backs of workers for years, its time they paid up. That's what pay equity is all about.

If the government sets a precedent to fund pay equity in the commercial child care sector, it would open the door for other entrepreneurs with female dominated work-forces to argue that they can't afford pay equity on their own either. Should the government fund Bata Shoes or Mac's Milk?

Q. Will commercial child care centres close if they have to pay the full pay equity adjustments by 1994?

A. Some centres may. If the 30% wage difference is closed, profit margins will be reduced. Some owners will find that it may not be worth their while to operate. The government must put in place funding and other initiatives to assist parents and staff to set-up alternative programs. Commercial operators could be encouraged to convert or to sell their equipment and furnishings to the new non-profit corporation.

Towards a High Quality Child Care System

What Does The Research Tell Us?

WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS:

The commercial sector has consistently paid lower wages and provided poorer benefits and working conditions, even when government funding is equivalent. Owners make profits by spending less money on wages and benefits. Continued government funding to commercial child care simply subsidizes these profits.

A national survey showed that wages in the commercial sector were 27% lower than in the non-profit sector and 49% lower than the publicly-operated sector.

Before 1987, when funding of commercial and non-profit centres was the same in Ontario, wages in the commercial sector were an average of 30% lower than non-profit and 50% lower than public sector wages.

In Alberta, both commercial and non-profit centres receive direct public funding. In 1991, wages are lower and fees are higher in the commercial sector.

An American study found substantial differences in wages and working conditions. Commercial centres spent a considerably lower proportion of budgets on staff salaries and benefits.

Staff in commercial centres are less likely to receive benefits, including paid sick leave, paid vacations, workers compensation, life insurance and professional development opportunities.

Staff in commercial centres have been shown to have lower job satisfaction, higher stress, and more job turnover.

QUALITY:

Research consistently shows that commercial child care is consistently poorer quality than non-profit or publicly-operated child care.

Research shows that commercial centres are:

- More likely to have staff-child ratio violation;
- More likely to violate staff-training requirements;
- Likely to have higher staff turnover, including supervisors;
- More likely to have complaints lodged against them;
- More likely to have staff who are less satisfied with salaries, benefits, and less committed to their jobs;
- Likely to have more monitoring visits;
- More likely to have spaces for which they are not licensed;
- Likely to pay lower wages and provide poorer benefits;

Why Commercial Child Care Is Not the Way To Go

- Likely to spend a small portion of total budget on staff.
- More likely to have higher incidences of infectious illnesses.

Research shows that non-profit centres:

- Rate better on key predictors of quality including wages, formal education, staff-child ratios, training in early childhood education and staff turnover;
- Provide more developmentally appropriate activities;
- Children spend less time aimlessly wandering and are more securely attached to their teachers;
- Have higher scores of appropriate caregiving and developmental appropriateness;
- Provide environments in which staff are less harsh and more sensitive with children;
- Provide better overall quality care than for-profits whether or not they receive government funds.

SOURCES:

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Towards a High Quality Child Care System

Converting Commercial Spaces to Non-Profit Spaces

A pro-active comprehensive plan is needed to encourage the conversion of commercial child care spaces to non-profit. The Ministry of Community and Social Services should put in place a conversion unit in every area of the province to provide information and technical assistance. Capital and start-up funds would be targeted for the conversion process.

A variety of approaches are required to deal with different situations.

Situation 1:

Owner/Operator/E.C.E. Supervisor supports conversion

- owner is qualified supervisor
- new non-profit corporation is established by parents and community
- M.C.S.S. provides minor capital funds
- non-profit corporation purchases equipment and furnishings at fair market value from owner
- supervisor may be hired, and staff re-hired by new board
- facility leased to new non-profit board from former operator who owns building, or;
- in rented facility, lease assigned to new non-profit board

Situation 2:

Owner/Operator wants out of business; facilities appropriate

- new non-profit corporation is established or other existing non-profit program becomes license-holder
- M.C.S.S. provides minor capital funds
- non-profit corporation purchases equipment and furnishings at fair market value from owner
- staff may be re-hired by new board
- facility leased to new board from former operator who owns building, or;
- in rented facility, lease assigned to new board or other existing non-profit operator

Situation 3:

Owner wants out of business; facilities not appropriate

- new non-profit corporation established or existing non-profit expands
- M.C.S.S. provides minor capital to purchase equipment and furnishings from former owner at market value, if appropriate
- new operations would be re-located in new facilities such as school or community centre
- or M.C.S.S. provide capital for new facilities and start-up funds to establish new program

It is important to note that 60% of commercial child care centres are located in rented facilities. (Child Care Branch, Feb. 1991) The conversion of commercial spaces to non-profit would not be as costly as many have predicted. New facilities would not be needed for all existing commercial spaces.

The conversion of the commercial child care sector must be done as part of a comprehensive planning process, and within the context of a fundamental reform of child care services. It is an important and necessary step toward a high-quality system of child care in Ontario.

Why Commercial Child Care Is Not the Way To Go

Converting Commercial Spaces to Non-Profit Spaces

GOING NON-PROFIT IN THE YUKON

(reprinted from: VISION, October 1990, No. 11)

It began in 1983, when I started Carol's Playcare Centre. I started a child care centre on my own because I was interested in young children and I felt I had something to offer. In the Yukon, at that time, we did not have any programs to assist centres with start-up costs or operational and maintenance costs. There was only one way to do it, so I started the Centre in my family home.

Through my involvement with the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, I gained some insight into the various child care situations in other regions of the country. I could see that profit versus non-profit was an emotionally-charged issue in some provinces. It was not an issue in the Yukon, because at the time day care was not funded in any way.

As the Centre grew, I often wondered if the 'profit' label was a misnomer. I knew how fragile the financial situation was at times. I couldn't earn a decent living. No one interested in making a profit in the Yukon would provide child care.

Because I believe parents have an important role in the provision of child care, I formed a Parent Advisory Board. Although this allowed parents to participate in the care of their children, it was not a solution to the stresses and problems of running a centre. I was a private operator and the Advisory Board was just that, an advisory board. The financial responsibility was solely in my hands. I could not go to the parents and ask them to raise funds. Nor could I expect them to advise me on financial matter, staff salaries, the level of staff training, or fees.

I continued to be interested in converting to a non-profit centre. There seemed to be many advantages. There were more sources of funding available to non-profit centres. There was more community support for non-profit centres. Parents would have a

real say in how the Centre was run. And there would be more heads to put together to solve problems. My shoulders, wide as they are, would not be the only ones carry the load.

As a result of considerable active lobbying by the Yukon Child Care Association, child care was gaining public support and beginning to take on a new focus in the Territory. Politicians were beginning to pay more attention to child care needs. Money started coming into child care. The Government created start-up grants for centres and family day homes. Operating and maintenance grants were made available to centres and homes. Annual enhancement grants were provided to purchase toys, equipment, and to help pay for renovations to child care centres and family day home facilities. Wage enhancement became a possibility, then a reality. These changes made it more feasible for a non-profit centre to survive.

My family and I had moved out by this time, so the building was used solely for the child care centre. It was licensed for 45 children, but ran six days a week from 6:30 a.m. until midnight. As a business, Carol's Playcare Centre was dismal. But closing the centre would be a drastic solution, and would put more than 20 staff out of work and leave 60 families without child care.

The Parent Advisory Board became a Parent-Staff Advisory Board. They started expressing interest in converting to a non-profit centre. It seemed the ideal solution. The Centre would be run by parents and staff with quality child care in mind. Staff would be paid reasonable salaries and could afford to stay at their jobs. There would be incentives for staff training, relief workers to spell child care workers so they could take coffee breaks and lunch hours, and good child-staff ratios. A cook would be hired to ensure high nutritional standards.

continued...

Towards a High Quality Child Care System

The Parent-Staff Advisory Board formed a non-profit Society, the Playcare Centre Society, with the intention of converting my centre to a non-profit centre. They registered with Consumer and Corporate Affairs in February 1989. The constitution created a Board of Directors made up of at least fifty-one per cent parents, and with staff positions on the Board. We believed that parents need to have a major voice in the running of the Centre. We also wanted staff to have a say because they are involved in the day-to-day operations. As Director of the Centre, I would not be on the Board and could not vote.

There was money available for conversion from the Territorial Government, through the Capital Development Grant of the Department of Health and Human Resources. Their criteria stated that the money made available for conversion needs to have a pay-back period of one year or less. The previous year, the Territorial Government had paid \$200,000 in subsidies to parents in money for operations and maintenance and for enhancement grants at Carol's Playcare Centre. Because it was considered a profit centre, the Government was not able to cost-share these expenses with the Federal Government through the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). By converting the Centre to non-profit, the Territorial Government would save \$100,000 in the first year.

The original application to the Capital Development Grant requested money to buy toys, equipment, and the building. This would mean the Playcare Centre Society would not have a mortgage or the increased operational costs a rental agreement would entail. From a number of perspectives, conversion was of benefit to the Centre and the territorial government. However, it became apparent that conversion was a new process in the Yukon and the money to buy the building was not approved. The application was changed to purchase only the toys and equipment.

The application was successful and on April 1, 1990 the Playcare Centre Society took over the operation of the Centre. Instead of one manager, a management team was formed with the six senior staff

taking one portfolio each. The portfolios included finances, staff training, policy and government liaison, parent relations, personnel, and recording secretary. Each staff person works four days a week with the children and one day in the office. The staff training officer is excused from an office day as his duties include evening workshops and sessions with staff and parents. The board of Directors have corresponding committees for most of these portfolios, to provide advice and help.

Although I could have stayed on as Director, I decided it would be better for the Centre to grow and develop on its own. I feel ever so pleased with the outcome. It is great to see so many parents and staff and others in the community working for the health of the Centre. It seems a much better model for quality, than one dependent on the personal resources of the person. I am pleased with the Playcare Centre Society, the Yukon's first conversion from profit to non-profit. There are plans in the works for at least one other conversion in the Yukon.

If you are a private owner and haven't considered conversion, I urge you to think about it. It is an option that can work well for everyone involved.

Carol Christian

Carol Christian was one of the eight executive members who established the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association in 1983. She represented the Yukon on their Steering Committee until 1990 and is presently the Child Care Coordinator in the Child Care Services Unit of the Yukon Government.

Why Commercial Child Care Is Not the Way To Go

The following letter was sent to us earlier this year from a former staff of a commercial centre. Her experience speaks volumes about why commercial child care is not the way to go.

When I took my first job at a day care centre 11 years ago, I had no idea of the meaning of profit, non-profit, co-op or nursery school. I was 18 years old, just out of high school and in need of a job. As I have always loved kids, it seemed like a good job to me at the time.

That first day care job was at a for-profit centre. I was hired as a teaching assistant to work with the older infants. As I worked at this job, I listened to bitter complaints from the experienced senior staff around. They frequently complained about the working conditions, the boss, the low pay, the lack of benefits. I was too young and inexperienced to understand that the centre lacked a cohesive program and proper ratios.

...barely meeting the minimum requirements.

I left that job after 2 1/2 years and took on several other jobs, some working with kids and some doing clerical work, and travelled. Eleven years down the road finds me completing my E.C.E. at Mothercraft and learning more about what quality childcare is.

Two years ago, I went back to that same centre to work while I began my E.C.E. The owner offered to pay me \$10.00 an hour and to allow me a flexible part-time schedule which would enable me to attend classes in the day. Through my courses at Mothercraft, I began to understand what a high quality child care programme is. I quickly realized that the programme I worked in was barely meeting the minimum requirements.

...activities often became crowd control situations.

Often in class I would pose hypothetical questions about program situations knowing that they were in fact true life situations based on my experience at the centre. I opened and closed the centre. I was often the only person in the room with a group of 8 or 9 children for diaper changes or to do circles so that it was impossible to provide attention to individual children - activities often became crowd control situations. We didn't go outside every day because we were often shortstaffed and the outside environment wasn't supportive, especially for the younger children.

...constant haggling over small amounts of money was demeaning

As I began to grow in my understanding, I could no longer pretend at my job that it was a good programme. I began to realize that even if I tried a little more so that the programme would get better, the support was not there. I began to voice my concerns at staff meetings but they were not heard. The most frustrating and demoralizing aspect of my experience at this centre was when I had to start bickering with my employer about my portion of the Direct Operating Grant. I was paid on an hourly basis and worked 25 hours a week. I was paid \$10.00 an hour, of which \$1.50 was paid by the DOG. I kept close track of my hours because I was often short paid on both my regular monthly cheque and also on my quarterly DOG cheque. Often as much as 10 hours would be missing, sometimes for overtime hours. We never got our DOG cheque on time; it was often paid 3 weeks after the close of the quarterly period. In addition, I began to receive \$1.36 an hour from the DOG instead of \$1.50. The owner told us that she was docking the DOG because she needed the difference to cover the cost of supply staff provided by an outside agency. The nickel-and-diming went as far as not paying us the DOG for holidays or a morning away sick. The constant haggling over small amounts of money was demeaning and drove me to leave.

Signed an advocate for high quality, universally accessible, non-profit, comprehensive child care system,
Barbara J. Burt

JOIN THE COALITION TODAY!

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

Provincial Organizations:

Under 20 members	\$25.
21 - 50 members	\$35.
51 - 200 members	\$60.
201 - 1000 members	\$120.
1001 - 5000 members	\$300.
Over 5000 members	\$400.

Local Child Care Groups

\$25.

Child Care Centres, union locals, libraries, other organizations or

institutions \$25.

Individuals \$12.

ANNUAL NETWORK MEMBERSHIP FEES

Child Care Centres:

\$125 + \$1 per licensed child care space

Private Home Day Care Agencies:

\$75 per agency + \$1 per home

Other unlicensed child care-related programs, such as resource centres, drop-in centres, toy lending libraries:

\$50 per program

I/We agree with the principles of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and wish to join.

I/We enclose the fee of

\$ _____

I/We enclose a donation of

\$ _____

Name _____

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I only want a subscription to the Newsletter and enclose \$20.

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