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Non-profit  
Child Care

# **KIDS NOT CASH ---**

## **Non-profit Child Care**

**Report of provincial campaign to improve child care; joint campaign by Ontario Federation of Labour and Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care.**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The child care crisis is not new. But it is growing. As the ranks of working mothers increase, Canadians have seen increasing demands that by far outpace the available services.

In Canada, there are only 220,517 licensed spaces for the two million children who need care. In bald terms, that means that for every child of working parents who has a space in a licensed child care facility, there are another nine who don't.

In Ontario, only eight per cent of kids in need get licensed, supervised care. There are just over 95,000 spaces for 1.1 million children under the age of ten.

Perhaps the most pervasive problem with child care is this: child care is not cheap. Most people can't afford it. It costs about \$5,000 per child a year in after-tax dollars.

Although child care has been under intensive study for about 15 years, only in the past year has Ontario seen any notable changes. At that, the changes were only to improve numbers of spaces, both subsidized and non-subsidized. They did not move Ontario families any closer to a cohesive system that meets the variety of needs at affordable prices.

Four major national studies have documented the need for dramatic and immediate changes to funding and provision of child care: Royal Commission on the Status of Women, 1970; Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, 1984; Katie Cooke's Report of the Task Force on Child Care, 1985; and the Special Parliamentary Committee on Childcare, 1987.

Trade unions, women's groups and child care advocates have lobbied over the years to get current government commitments, insufficient as they are, to improve funding and availability of child care.

Even the Ontario Government's White Paper, New Directions, was published only weeks before the Liberal Government dissolved the Legislature for the provincial election in September, 1987. The Liberals had made a specific commitment to child care in the Liberal-New Democrat legislative accord, the 1985 document which outlined the terms on which the minority Liberal government could govern for two years.

When the long-awaited policy paper did appear, it left open the possibility of continued funding for commercial centres. Child care advocates have pushed the Ontario Government for a ban on for-profit funding. That, they argue, is the only way to be sure that public funds go directly into quality of care and workers' salaries. In the for-profit sector, financial information is private; there's no way to know where the money goes.

The idea of governments offering grants to private operators runs counter to the objectives of virtually all child care advocates, be they from women's groups, the labour movement, or child care coalitions.

A national study done for the special parliamentary committee which reported earlier this year showed that non-profit centres are much more likely to provide quality care than are for-profit centres. It's a lesson learned well from the private nursing home sector. In that case, government funds have subsidized the profits of companies that cut corners on staffing, nutrition and care.

The same holds true with child care, says the study done by SPR Associates of Toronto. The survey of 1,000 centres across Canada showed that one in four for-profit centres provide less than adequate care. For non-profit centres, that figure is one in ten.

The profit question has bearing on several fundamental aspects of child care: for example; quality, staffing, nutrition, environment, and provision of infant care.

The only way to maximize profits is to cut corners in those crucial areas. Cuts in staffing affect both the worker and the child. Low wages and heavy workloads cause burnout among the staff. Turnover is high and it's very difficult to obtain or retain trained, competent child care workers.

With so many problems at hand, and the child care issue so high on the public agenda, two Ontario groups toured the province during the spring of 1987 and heard from more than 170 groups and individuals.

The Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare visited 13 communities to draw a tighter focus on the need for non-profit care for children of working parents.

This report documents the views and concerns of parents, child care workers, teachers, and community leaders as presented to public forums. It also analyzes the information gathered from meetings with local advocates and politicians, and visits to child care centres, special needs programs, workplaces and community colleges.

The Ontario Federation of Labour is the central labour body representing 800,000 workers and their families. As a founding member of the Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare, the OFL launched the first

province-wide child care campaign in 1981. The Coalition grew out of that campaign and now represents provincial organizations of teachers, social service workers, trade unions, women's groups, students and community child care groups.

One of the first achievements of the Coalition was a comprehensive policy statement, Daycare Deadline: 1990 which provided the backbone for organizing and lobbying on the child care issue between 1981 and 1987. The document called for a universally-accessible, quality child care system by the end of the decade. That could be achieved by increasing grants and numbers of subsidized child care spaces, the document argued.

With the 1990 deadline fast approaching, and given the lack of action during the first half of the decade, it is not realistic to expect universal care within the span of three years. In that respect, advocates have modified their call for universal child care by 1990.

This report sets out realistic deadlines and short- and long-term objectives.

Advocates, including the OFL and day care coalition, have managed to exact some progress and commitment from the Ontario Government.

What working parents and their children have now is better than what they had, but less than what they need.

## QUALITY, WAGES AND PROFIT

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### Chapter One

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#### CHANGES IN CHILD CARE

Horror stories were not hard to find back in 1981 when the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) and Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare (OCBDC) surveyed the state of child care across the province.

There were so few spaces for children, and what was available was so expensive, that parents turned to putting their children in alternative care that often provided physical babysitting, but inadequate care.

"In my son's short life, he was fed starches and sugars because they keep children quiet, and were cheaper than fruits and vegetables," Thunder Bay mother Maxine McLister told a public forum in 1981.

Six years later, stories like that are too plentiful, but the situation has, without doubt, improved for some people in some communities.

There are more child care spaces now. Regulations are tighter and better enforced. Some child care workers are now represented by unions and are better paid. That directly affects the quality of care provided by staff. But changes in workers' salaries and numbers of spaces are small in proportion to what working parents and their children need.

However, the progress proves that child care advocates are on the right track when they lobby for better government funding and more licensed child care spaces. Experiences over the past six years have

helped advocates fine-tune their objectives. The correct direction is more firmly etched in people's minds and on the public agenda. Working parents and their children need a comprehensive child care system that responds to the variety of needs, an objective the current patchwork system can not possibly achieve.

About 60 per cent of women with pre-school children work outside the home. That figure is expected to increase to 75 per cent by the end of the century. That's little more than a decade away, and judging from the progress made in the last decade, it's safe to say the pace of progress will have to quicken.

At the end of all discussions about the many aspects of child care, only one thing counts. Quality. To be successful, child care programs must provide the following:

- programs that are appropriate for the age of the children, and offer variety, flexibility and imagination;
- opportunities for physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth;
- High staff-to-child ratio (four children per staff person);
- attractive, adaptable, well-equipped and safe facilities designed to suit children;
- certified, energetic care givers who love children, have decent salaries, benefits and working conditions, and who have regular opportunity to develop professionally;
- special needs care for children who need it, but wish to stay in the "mainstream" child care environment.
- mechanisms for parents to be involved in the design and operation of child care programs.

Two labour councils from different parts of the province raised concerns about the lack of quality, supervised care.

"These small children, babies and toddlers cannot talk, and if mistreated, have no way of even telling their parents. The only possible way of telling if these children are looked after properly is watching for these babies to show physical displeasure, unhappiness, or irritability when the parent picks them up on their way home from work," said the Cobourg and District Labour Council.

In Dryden, the labour council spoke about the relationship between qualifications of trained staff and quality of care.

"The quality of care offered by untrained persons operating out of their homes is unpredictable. People are offering child care that is sometimes little more than babysitting at that. There is no supervision to ensure that adequate food, toys, and education materials are provided, that the homes are safe and interesting and contribute to their development."

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## **WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF CHILD CARE STAFF**

Since child care is funded primarily by user fees, the salaries of child care workers remain shockingly low. The average worker earns about \$14,000 a year. That's less than zookeepers make for looking after animals. At best, it's two-thirds of the average weekly industrial wage. An instructor from Hamilton's Mohawk College, Karyn Callaghan, told the OFL-OCBDC forum that the college has difficulty attracting students to early childhood education (ECE) programs because assistant managers make more for tending hamburgers at McDonald's.

Some unionized child care workers can earn as much as \$18,000 to \$24,000. But most workers are not unionized and earn \$14,000 or less. Unionized or not, however, wages in for-profit centres are about 30 per cent less than in their non-profit counterparts.

Early childhood educators are in effect subsidizing the cost of child care with their low salaries. That results in high turnover and therefore, low quality.

"Quality comes from the staff who carry out a planned program of activities; most importantly, a program where there is a lot of attention and affection from professional staff," said Heather Corner, a Dryden child care worker.

In North Bay, the YWCA program now has quality, trained staff, but co-ordinators wonder how long they can keep them.

"I know that I have a well-trained, experienced, dedicated staff, capable of providing excellent care for children, which is what all of us here are striving for. How long will I be able to keep this staff if I can only offer them low wages and few benefits? Staff salaries and parent fees are definitely related," Virginia Delachevrotiere told the public forum.

Salaries and fees are definitely related. The problem is that parents can't afford to pay higher fees. The only answer is to increase government funding, and make it available for only non-profit operators.

"It is well-documented that early childhood educators are poorly paid. We have seen that the average difference in wages between an ECE graduate and an untrained aide is only about 80 cents an hour. This is demoralizing. It makes it hard to attract good candidates and to keep them in the field. One of this year's grads is pursuing her career at McDonald's!" said Karyn Callaghan of Mohawk College.

For those people who try to juggle restricted budgets, the needs of children and the desire to pay workers a decent wage, the battle is endless.

"Budget restraints often cripple the centre in many ways," said Trudy Dienes of Trent Co-operative Daycare.

"We are a very small non-profit centre; therefore, collecting (our funds) is no easy task. Restraints are also responsible for the low salaries the centre is forced to pay its staff. When compared to the responsibilities that the staff is entrusted with, these salaries look ridiculously low. By paying these salaries and having these budget constraints, what is it we are saying?"

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## **PROFIT VERSUS NON-PROFIT**

About 35 per cent of Ontario's child care spaces are for-profit. Far from trying to put commercial operators out of business, child care advocates argue commercial centres can exist for parents who choose private centres. However, advocates say public dollars should not subsidize private operators any more than governments subsidize private schools.

Canadian Auto Workers Local 1325 spoke to the London forum. "In a for-profit program, a portion of income from parents' fees and public funds goes to the owners .....Even with a direct grant, in a for-profit program, less money would be spent on the child care program, and salaries would still be considerably lower than salaries in a non-profit program."

The next few pages contain a series of quotes from parents, child care providers, and trade unionists who spoke out against commercial funding. Since they are the people on the front lines, dealing with the issue in a real and practical sense, their words speak volumes.

**Deanna Koval, Supervisor, Norah Love Centre,  
Sioux Lookout**

"The current initiatives by the provincial government to support for-profit daycare centres concerns us. This is a case where, in an effort to increase spaces or "access" in the short term, "quality" may be sacrificed. Other social services that operate for profit have been plagued by improper care for its user group. We can't tolerate this mistake with regard to our children."

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**Eleanor Murdoch, Parent, Toronto**

"I have worked in a for-profit operation and have personally experienced the problems and frustrations associated with "running" a centre on a "shoe string" as it were. I'm talking about cutbacks on staff, equipment, supplies, food, and last but not least, the appalling salaries.

"The Metro Toronto Day Care Committee salary survey of May, 1986 can back me up when I say that salaries in commercial centres are much lower than those in Metro and non-profit centres.

"There are other intolerable situations which I have seen, and should be noted. . . . Also, I had to bite my lip when the owner of the centre went out of her way to ascertain when "exactly" the provincial inspector would be making her rounds. "

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**Janet Cioffi, Commercial Centre,  
Child Care Worker , Toronto**

"Most of the equipment was broken, used or second-hand. The playground was small with one slide, swing and a tunnel. Don't get me wrong. They had new toys and equipment but it was put out for "show" when the inspectors came around, and for some reason, the owners knew when the provincial inspectors were coming because they would tell us to wash and clean the toys.

"There was a large number of children in one room. I was working alone in a room of 13 toddlers. The ratio is supposed to be five toddlers to one adult. There were no training requirements for the staff; the only person with an E.C.E. (early childhood education) diploma was the supervisor. "

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**Cheryl Park, Child Care Worker, Sudbury**

"Some graduates work in private profit-making centres. They are good educators but the working conditions take their toll. The turnover tends to be high; one cannot blame these individuals for wanting better jobs for themselves and in getting the better job they can become better educators and offer better care.

"Those who stay in these settings work hard for minimal remuneration. In one situation, two years after her starting date, the educator was making \$5 an hour. For several years, this individual hoped for better equipment for the children. However, it was not forthcoming. Educators working in this type of centre

are not privy to such so-called luxuries as 'paid professional development' or input into budget requests for children's equipment. "

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**Mary Jane Visser, (Former Commercial Centre Worker)  
Guelph**

"Toys, equipment, books were broken, badly in need of repair or replacement, supplies were limited so that planned activities often couldn't be done, enrolment increased without additional staff being hired with the result being that teacher-child ratios were by no means within Day Nursery Act standards.

"Children were left unsupervised or with minimal supervision. At times, one teacher was responsible for the supervision of up to 40 children in outdoor play. In my last month working at the centre I was responsible for 11 to 17 three-year-olds, which is well above Day Nursery Act standards of one teacher to eight children for this age group.

"Programming was difficult to complete with only myself to set up, supervise the children and clean up. I was burnt out. I wasn't effective with the children. There wasn't enough of me to go around. I resigned along with four other staff. I struggled with the decision to leave for months....In the aftermath of this experience I learned from previous and present employees of the centre that these conditions have existed for sometime and they continue to exist. "

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**Eve Patrick, friend of a Sudbury child care worker who feared losing her job if she spoke out against practices in the commercial centre where she is employed.**

"At times the child/teacher ratio has been disregarded, leaving the teacher alone with 22 children. It is impossible to diaper one child and to supervise 21 others adequately.

"On more than one occasion at the end of the teacher's shift, the owner would supervise while drinking beer. Often, older children are left unsupervised. It is frightening to hear that 20 children are transported in a van without seat belts to the grocery store or to a friend's and that they remain inside the van waiting with the teacher while the owner's business is attended to.

"In three years, a total of \$300 was spent on toys and books. Previously, broken toys remained on the shelf. There is still a shortage of toys; therefore toys cannot be rotated. In an attempt to correct this, the educator spends evenings making games and toys to enrich the program. The outdoor equipment includes one bike, three plastic tubes, one swing, an empty sandbox with sand toys and a climber peaking approximately 10 feet, which is inappropriate for preschoolers.

"Conditions under which teachers work are also contributors to the quality of child care. My colleague has worked in situations where:

- 1. Lunch hours and breaks have been non-existent.**
- 2. Salaries range from minimum wage to \$6 an hour, with no benefits.**

3. The working day has been as long as 9-1/2 hours, excluding preparation time spent at home.
  4. After 2 1/2 years of working for one day care, a two-week vacation was granted for the first time.
  5. Regular staff meetings essential to supportive conditions are non-existent.
  6. There is no encouragement from operators for quality care.
  7. High staff turnover resulted in inconsistent care.
  8. When intervening for the protection of the child, my colleague's job has been threatened. "
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**CUPE 2204, Ottawa**

"We believe that further funding to commercial daycare operators will result in more of the types of problems outlined (elsewhere). We oppose direct government grants to daycare centres that are operated on a profit basis. No new purchase of service agreements should be made with commercial centres and all existing agreements with profit operators should be phased out over the next five years. If this were done, commercial operators who are in daycare simply to make a profit would close and those truly interested in early childhood development would convert to non-profit."

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**Canadian Union of Public Employees,  
Thunder Bay**

"Quality child care is attained when qualified and dedicated people care for children with the "profit" being the well-being of the child - not the bank balance."

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INFORMAL AND PRIVATE  
HOME DAY CARE

Informal and private home day care is a type of care that is provided in a home setting. It is often provided by family members or friends of the child. This type of care is often used when the child's parents are unable to provide care for the child during the day. Informal and private home day care is often used for children who have special needs or who are at risk of being abused or neglected. This type of care is often used for children who are in the foster care system or who are in the custody of the state.

The quality of informal and private home day care is often very high. This is because the caregivers are often family members or friends of the child, and they are often very dedicated and caring. However, there are some risks associated with this type of care. For example, the caregivers may not be properly trained or supervised, and they may not have the necessary resources to provide high-quality care. Additionally, there is a risk of abuse or neglect in this type of care.

There are many factors that can affect the quality of informal and private home day care. These factors include the caregiver's education and training, the caregiver's experience, the caregiver's relationship with the child, and the caregiver's access to resources. Additionally, the quality of the home environment can also affect the quality of care. For example, a home that is clean, safe, and well-lit is more likely to provide high-quality care than a home that is dirty, unsafe, and poorly lit.

The Department has been made that because so many parents use informal care, it must be done

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## THE VARIETY OF NEEDS

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### Chapter Two

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#### INFORMAL AND PRIVATE HOME DAY CARE

Women are entering the work force in increasing numbers. Maintaining the present system for funding day care will mean more children will be found in informal care situations. It is very important that the implications of this be closely examined. It is no longer possible to assume that most children are being cared for by relatives in these informal arrangements. The extended family which could provide child care is fast disappearing.

The difficulty of ensuring quality of care in unlicensed home care situations is insurmountable. The very nature of informal care is that it is offered without supervision. Access to training workshops, to lending libraries and similar supportive services are only as useful as each individual caregiver chooses to make them.

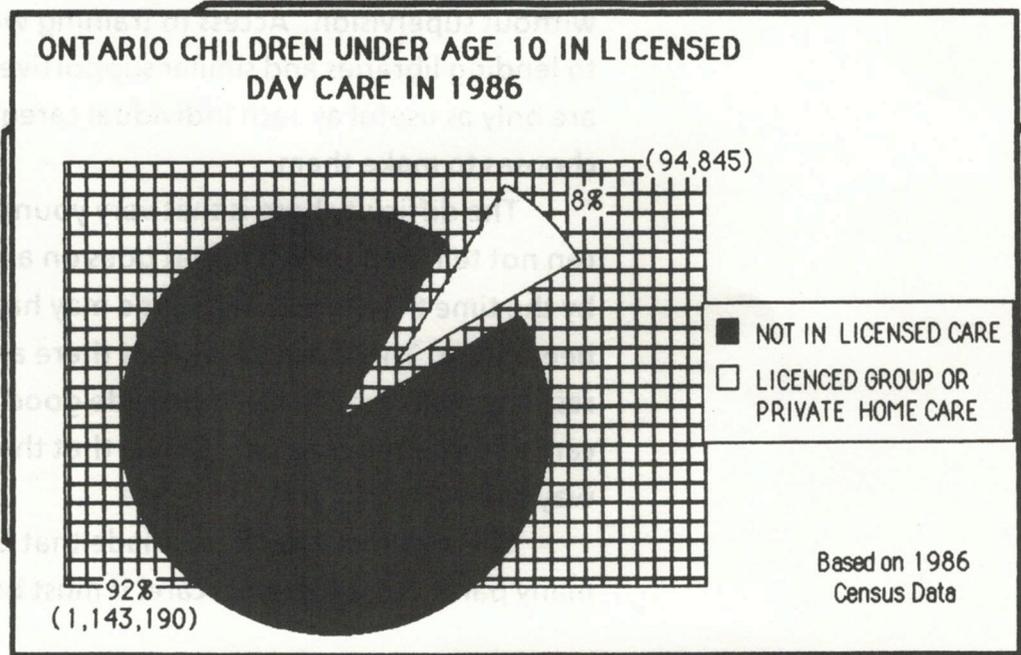
The difficulty here is that very young children can not tell their parents what goes on all day and by the time they can, the damage may have already been done. This is not to say that there aren't very responsible caregivers who provide good quality care without supervision. It's just that there is no way to ensure that this is the case.

The argument has been made that because so many parents use informal care, it must be their

first choice. In fact, it is usually their only choice. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa-Carleton's Study, "Who Cares" identified parents' choices for child care. Here's a breakdown of what 665 parents said when asked what their "ideal" day care arrangement would be.

RESPONDENTS	RESPONSE
48.8 per cent	child care centres
15.7 "	paid sitter in home
12.1 "	live-in relative
9.7 "	paid sitter in respondent's home
7.9 "	non-resident relative
5.1 "	paid live-in sitter

The Social Planning Council said there is no way to disguise the fact that informal care is attractive because it's easy on government coffers. It would be less attractive "if we chose to consider our children's welfare first."



Even if informal home care were a more desirable alternative, there are not enough adults available to provide it full-time. Historically, many women left the labour force following marriage or the birth of their first child. However, the relationship between childrearing and reduced female labour force participation appears to have been weakened significantly in the last decade.

Colleen Evetts told the London forum that 75 per cent of London families are two-income families. Add to that the numbers of disabled, seniors, single parents, and one-income two-parent families, and there are not many people available to care for the children of working parents.

"Last month, my two-year old son started with his fourth day care provider, who happens to be the only woman I've had from my neighbourhood," said Evetts. "The previous three providers have either re-entered the labour market or are taking courses in upgrading."

The Dryden and District Labour Council cited a case from about a year and a half ago, where parents found care for their children, but tragically, it was not the kind of care that was necessary. Poor quality, unlicensed care can lead to heartbreak, said the labour council, referring to the deaths by fire of four children and the woman looking after them.

According to the Coroner's Jury, the caregiver had consumed alcohol and drugs.

The criteria for choosing informal care seems to be availability, not necessarily quality. Family Focus, a group from the County of Leeds-Grenville near Brockville said that 94 per cent of child care in the area is in the caregiver's private home.

In Cobourg, the story is much the same. "We have found in the Northumberland area a severe lack of supervised, licensed centres. As all our child care centers are full and have waiting lists, they could not even begin to fill the need. Less than one quarter of the respondents to our survey used the child care system," said the Cobourg and District Labour Council.

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## **INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

It is virtually impossible to find licensed care for children under 2 years of age. Most day care centers do not accept infants and young toddlers, so parents are often forced to use private home day care that may or may not be quality, efficient, or reliable.

"In our community, less than 2 per cent of infants with working parents can be accommodated in licensed care, compared with a province wide average of 9 per cent," the Sudbury Women's Centre told the forum.

The Waterloo Infant-Toddler Daycare Association was formed by a group of concerned working parents. Three years ago there were no infant daycare centres in Waterloo Region and there was a long waiting list for subsidized parents. Non-subsidized parents, of course, cannot take a subsidized space.

"For three years we attempted to rent a location. The housing situation combined with the high standards of the Day Nurseries Act left us with no space. Finally, two of our members sold their own homes, risked all their finances and purchased a special property just for the daycare. The couple live in a house on the front of the property and the daycare is built onto a renovated workshop at the back," said the Waterloo Association.

The centre opened on March 31, 1987 and has spaces for 10 infants, 8 toddlers and 13 preschoolers. There are 22 names on the infant waiting list.

"Our phone calls tell us that the toddlers could also have been filled many times over," says the Association.

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## RURAL NEEDS

Rural and agricultural workers face the complex problem of trying to find child care at odd hours and for long hours during certain seasons. In fact, one of the biggest chores for farmers is finding child care for children who just don't fit into a '9-to-5' schedule.

"Agriculture is the only industry in which children play and grow up in the workplace," Eleanor Stillman told the Peterborough forum. Stillman is a parent, child care worker and lives on a farm.

She stressed that rural families, whether farmers or not, need local child care. Travelling to towns or cities to drop off and pick up children is not feasible for many rural workers, she said.

"Those few people who care for children in their homes are able to meet only a small percentage of the need. A central community day care centre or other support system to encourage more in-home day care may be solutions."

In the Brockville area, Family Focus Group's Christine Peets brought forth concerns of parents who work their farms. "Farm women are often partners in the farm business and they need child care (usually in the home because of distances), especially at peak times like planting and harvest.

"Farming is dangerous and the farm is no place for playful children at busy times. A few creative farm programs have begun in other counties. To date there are no such supports in Leeds and Grenville."

While all working parents face the challenge of placing their children in quality, affordable child care environments, there's an added dimension for parents from minority race and cultural groups.

Black parents, for example, have a need and desire to protect their children from racism, the Congress of Black Women told the Toronto forum. Since child care workers spend a great deal of time with children, parents are very concerned with matching their children to caregivers whose values they find attractive.

"Black parents are very fearful of child care workers who are not aware of their racial biases and who unintentionally make children feel dissatisfied with themselves. We feel that it is important for workers in such critical positions to be adequately trained to anticipate and care for growing minds. We recognize that this is a major task. However, if it is to be accomplished in a multicultural context it is even more complex."

These views were echoed by other ethnic groups across the province, pointing to the need for child care programs to reflect the cultural variety of our society; for example, in toys, books, games, stories and language to help children from homes where English is not the first language.

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## SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

Latchkey kids. It's a term we're all getting to know. It describes the thousands of children who come home after school to empty houses because their parents aren't yet home from work.

It is difficult, but still necessary, for child care centres to expand their programs to accommodate before- and after-school care. Many groups and individuals advocated this action, combined with child drop-in centres or toy lending libraries, and child care services within school settings.

"Finding a permanent space for our facilities is a problem," North Bay mother Eileen Parent said. "As schools expand their programs, or enrolment increases, our day care space within the school setting is needed and we must relocate.

"This is actually happening to our centre and causing concern among our parent users. We would like to see more centres in other locations. Parents are unwilling to send their child out of their neighbourhood. They would rather take the risk of leaving the child on his own at home for an hour, than having him or her transported to a centre not located within the school setting."

Transportation is a problem for many school-age children. Unless the child care facilities are on existing bus routes, the children can't get from school to the centre, and for that reason alone, many miss out on before- and after-school care that is actually available. It's just not accessible.

A North Bay parent, Virginia Delachevrotiere, talked about delaying enrolling her children in school until she knew where they would go for care.

"Last week, I was informed that Vincent Massey School in North Bay will not have room for the YMCA School Age Program and the Program must move. A new location has not been established. My children and I need and want to continue using the YMCA program for school-age daycare. At this point I do not know where it will be; therefore, I do not know which school my children will need to be enrolled in. I don't know if busing will be available."

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**STUDENTS WHO ARE PARENTS** For students, the major issue in terms of child care is accessibility. The Ontario Federation of Students told forums that only about one third of Ontario's post-secondary institutions offer child care programs. Waiting lists are long, and inevitably parents' studies (often the women) are interrupted.

The University of Guelph Staff Association pointed to the need for flexibility. Some students do want full-time care but others need only part-time care for a few hours several days a week.

"This type of care can at present be accommodated only by a private home care arrangement for which there is no subsidy and often no receipt for income tax purposes. Daycare subsidy for students needs to be readily available for both full -and part-time care in any licensed centre chosen by the student."

One proposal that was offered to help alleviate the waiting list at the daycare centre at Fanshawe College in London was unfortunately turned down for lack of funding and available space. The proposal was to enhance the existing early childhood education program by offering a training laboratory in infant/toddler care. It had been hoped that 32 new spaces would be

developed, on a student needs/priority basis, followed by staff and community needs.

The present facility has space for 20 children from 2-1/2 to four years of age. Colleen Evetts, a student and parent, told the London forum about 23-year-old Cathy, a student and mother of a 3 1/2-year-old son.

"Cathy put off continuing her education until Sean was old enough to attend a child care facility close to home. This centre does not offer infant care and being a one-car family, Cathy has to rely on the city bus service.

"Last year, Cathy enrolled in the diploma Nursing Program at Fanshawe. Although there were stressful times when classes ran later than expected making Cathy late in picking up Sean she managed to get through the year. But now Cathy has a real problem with no easy solution in sight. Her schedule for the coming year has clinical laboratories starting as early as 7 a.m. This means that she will need care provided for her son at 6 a.m. The daycare centre opens at 7 a.m. and Cathy's husband works shifts."

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**SHIFTWORK AND  
EXTENDED HOURS  
(EVENINGS AND WEEKENDS)**

About one in five workers work shifts. The shifts rotate, so they may work two weeks of nights, two weeks of evenings, then two weeks of days.

Still other workers put in irregular hours, or work what has become known as the 'continental work week'. That means their shifts are completely irregular. They may work three days, then a day off, back for five days, then two days off, back for seven days, with three days off, and so on.

Add to these people the numbers of workers whose jobs demand extra or irregular hours even within a regular workweek, and it becomes obvious that rigid child care programs that operate during regular hours are of no use.

Most child care centres have fixed hours that, at the most, run from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Working parents whose needs are not served turn to alternative methods of care that may be sub-standard or terribly inconvenient. Single parents deal with the pressure of trying to, on their own, piece together a work day, a home life, and child care.

Two-parent families have the advantage of spreading the demands around. But increasingly, both parents work outside the home. If they both work shifts, complications really take hold.

Child care advocates and trade unions say it will take a comprehensive child care system including 24-hour care where necessary to help quell the chaos endured by parents who work shifts, weekends and irregular hours. In community after community, the OFL and OCBDC heard about these problems.

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### **Cobourg and District Labour Council**

"If the parent's employer wants the parent to work overtime, the employer does not look too kindly on absenteeism caused by lack of available daycare. But if you are late picking your child up at the daycare centre, you are financially penalized for doing so."

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### **Sudbury Women's Centre**

"Sudbury has three hospitals, a taxation data centre and INCO. In each of these, shiftwork is the norm. Yet there are no day care facilities that offer day care outside of the 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. time slot. This lack of service means that many women who work at the hospitals or the taxation centre or single-parent men who work at INCO do not have access to day care from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. or weekends.

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### **Communications and Electrical Workers of Canada, Hamilton**

"Our local has 500 members, including 175 women, many of whom are sole-support parents. (Our workplace operates) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Our members have incredible problems in arranging quality child care not only because of the range of hours we work, but also because we often have no idea until the Thursday of each week what hours we will have to work the next week. That makes long-range planning next to impossible.

"In some cases our members work all night, come home and watch the children all day while the spouse is at work, then nap before heading into work again that evening. It is difficult, if not impossible to find child care for the period between 5 a.m. and 9 a.m. when both parents are at work but the stress on the family relationship of almost no time together creates another whole range of problems."

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## **United Electrical Workers, Hamilton**

"The inflexibility of the daycare system forces some workers to leave their children in risky situations: Case in point ... A single mother of three boys ranging in age from three years to 12 years had to work steady night shift for nine months before she could resolve a sitter problem, due to inflexibility. She would put them to bed before leaving for work at 10:30 p.m., leaving the 12-year old in charge, hoping and praying an emergency wouldn't come up...."

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## **FRANCOPHONE PROGRAMS**

In areas of the province where there is a francophone population, the forums heard from the association representing Franco-Ontarians (Association Canadienne-Francaise de l'Ontario/ACFO). Expressing much the same concern as francophone rights groups express over schools, the Association called for francophone child care programs.

In Ottawa, where about 20 per cent of the population are Francophone, the Social Planning Council said only a third of Francophone children are in unilingual French child care programs.

"(F)rancophone parents wishing to preserve their linguistic and cultural identity increasingly realize that "bilingual" daycare services, like bilingual schools, tend to serve as a vehicle for the assimilation of the minority group into the majority group."

In Thunder Bay, the Association of Francophones of Northwest Ontario (Association des francophones du nord-ouest de l'Ontario) said

the Ontario Government has failed to live up to its promise to build a system of child care to meet the needs of Francophone families and their children.

In London, Lucinda Londau, a spokesperson for a francophone child care centre (La Ribambelle) talked about the frustration of trying to find qualified Francophone child care workers to work for a low salary.

"Of course, our needs were of a very particular nature in looking for a Director of a French centre in London, so we had limitations to begin with. However the concern raised by the Board of La Ribambelle was: how do we remain competitive with other centres in our fees and at the same time offer salaries which would attract individuals with the best qualifications?

"Even our offering of \$21,000 for our Director's position pales in comparison with a school teacher's salary; yet the Director's challenges and responsibilities are considerably more demanding."

Based on a recent analysis of government policy and programs, ACFO has identified a number of barriers to the establishment and survival of French day care centers:

**1. The lack of specific policies and funding criteria vis- a-vis French child care services, that take into account such factors as:**

- the longer start-up time because of the need to recruit on a much broader scale than is normally necessary;**
- additional advertising needed to reach a more scattered community;**
- difficulty in recruiting qualified personnel;**

- the higher cost of French language educational material;
- 2. The lack of an overall policy in the allocation of subsidized spaces so as to ensure a minimum allocation to French day care centers and address the problems associated with transportation;
- 3. Transportation problems, due to the larger territory covered by most French day care centers;
- 4. Lack of information on French day care centers and the latest methods and materials available.

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## **CHILD CARE FOR WOMEN IN EMERGENCY SHELTERS**

One in eight Ontario women are battered, according to the Ontario Women's Directorate. Only a small proportion of them actually get help from the scarce and overloaded emergency shelters. But many of those who do find refuge face an entirely different lifestyle. So do their children.

They find themselves living in co-operative environments. The mothers and children need help to cope with not only their physical and psychological battering, but with the new lifestyle.

In London, the Women's Community House talked about Merrymount Children's Centre that does provide the guidance and support these women and their children need.

The centre provides an environment and people to help reduce stress, provide parent support to reduce isolation and help with parenting skills, and to provide care and nurturing for the children who are going through the trauma of parent separation, relocation, and the effects of having been battered themselves, or knowing that their mother had been battered.

The Community House told the forum that the usual problems women on low incomes face in getting subsidized child care are even worse for battered women. They wait for a bureaucracy to respond while their lives are in ruins.

"Women are often placed on waiting lists and must wait a significant period of time before subsidized daycare becomes available to them. Significant limitations exist for battered women through the delay in daycare spaces."

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#### **PARENTAL LEAVE AND CARE FOR SICK CHILDREN**

There are moves that employers can and should make to help relieve the child care crisis. These are not necessarily in the direct realm of child care, but in providing mechanisms for parents to themselves care for newborns and sick children.

At best, new mothers are entitled to 17 weeks of maternity leave. Extended unpaid leaves are sometimes negotiable, or sometimes provided for in collective agreements. For most new parents, extended leave is not granted.

The OFL and OCBDC hold a common position that employers should provide longer maternity/paternity leaves and adoption leaves. This would help alleviate the desperate need for infant care, which is so costly and difficult to find.

Even when parents have been able to find and afford child care, they have to cope with occasional illness. Parents feel very guilty about leaving sick children in someone else's care. And child care centres are not the places for sick children who may spread germs and illness.

The Canadian Auto Workers union is one of many unions to advocate employers providing paid

sick days for parents to be at home with sick children. The CAW argues for a minimum of 10 such days a year.

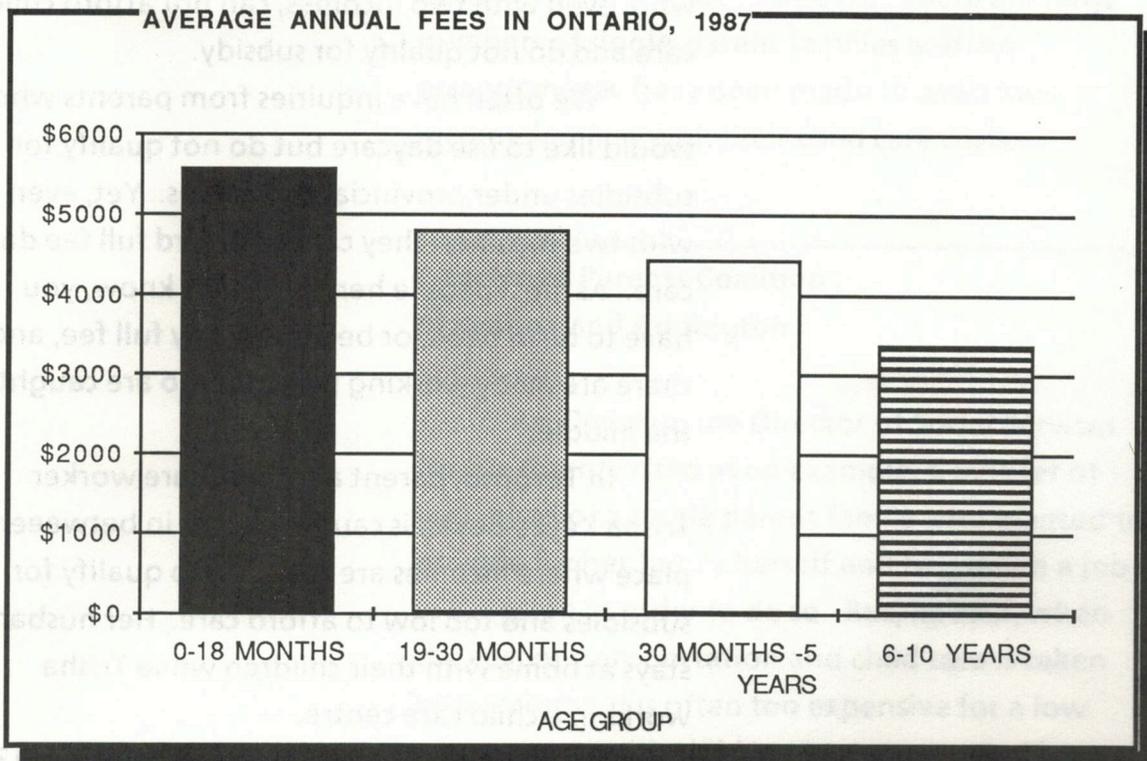
"Such a system should also include generous maternity, paternity, shared parental, and adoption leaves so that parents can remain home with children for a good period of time after their arrival. Workers should continue to accrue seniority and have a guaranteed job at the same wage upon their return to work," said the CAW to the Toronto forum.

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## FUNDING

### Chapter Three

Quality child care in a licensed centre costs about \$5,000 a year. The average income earner with two children can't afford it.



The Ontario Government and municipalities jointly subsidize child care for low-income parents. However, the subsidies fall drastically short of meeting the need. Sixty per cent of Ontario parents of pre-school children qualify for subsidies. Only 10 per cent actually receive financial aid.

While of benefit to many working people, subsidies do not help middle-income earners. Nor are subsidies available for parents who use private babysitters.

Despite the subsidy programs, parents still pay 87 per cent of the \$1.2 billion a year spent on child care costs in Ontario.

In Peterborough, Joan Sangster of Trent Co-operative Day Care told the forum of the parents who, even with two incomes, can not afford child care and do not qualify for subsidy.

"We often have inquiries from parents who would like to use daycare but do not qualify for subsidies under provincial guidelines. Yet, even with two incomes, they cannot afford full fee day care. As most people here probably know, you have to be in need, or be able to pay full fee, and there are many working parents who are caught in the middle."

In Toronto, parent and child care worker Trisha Keyes-Bevan is caught in that in between place where incomes are too high to qualify for subsidies and too low to afford care. Her husband stays at home with their children while Trisha works in a child care centre.

"I am the parent of a five-year-old and a 13 month old. Should we require childcare, we would not qualify for a subsidy. We would be looking at paying an average (based on my Centre's rates) of

\$230 per week. This translates to \$920 per month or \$11,040 per year! This amount is totally unviable and for this reason we have decided (at great financial hardship) that my husband will stay home presently to look after our children while I work."

Getting a subsidy is a complex, detailed process that involves full reporting of all sources of revenue and all living expenses.

Many groups and organizations spoke to forums about the involved and unfair process. The added dimension, they say, is that without standard province-wide or national systems, people are forced to deal with local governments who are not obliged to meet minimum requirements.

In Lennox and Addington, an area near Belleville, the mothers of about 1,500 pre-school children work outside the home. There are large numbers of single-parent families and no arrangements have been made to assist low-income families with their child care costs.

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### **Concerned Parents Coalition of Lennox and Addington**

"Art Dawson, the Director of Social Services for the County cited as an example, a mother of two, head of a single parent family who wanted to provide for her family herself and had taken a job in Kingston in order to do so. But, he said, when the cost of transportation and child care is taken into account, it is often too expensive for a low wage earner with children to go to work. The mother of two, he said had to twice call social services for help in meeting her basic monthly expenses of food, shelter, childcare and

transportation costs. Help that was not within the mandate of his department to provide. From the point of view of a child welfare agency, the situation in Lennox and Addington is desperate."

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**Vala Monestime Belter and Valeda Begin,  
Mattawa Child Care Centre**

"We are a non-profit daycare in a small Northeastern Ontario town surrounded by several smaller townships and are the only licensed daycare service in a 40-mile radius. Although our town has purchased 20 subsidized spaces at our centre and provides this service to the residents of the town, the surrounding townships have refused to obtain such services for their taxpayers.

"This creates the situation where families residing just a few miles from our centre can not have the same service as their co-worker who resides within the town limits, regardless of their personal circumstances. Our problem is having to deal with local councils to obtain subsidies. Generally, in small Ontario communities, town councils are often composed of people who believe the only place for a mother is in the home. They do not understand the present need for daycare or the issue of daycare, never having been in the circumstances.

"The point we would like to make is that we feel the present method of application for an allotment of subsidy spaces is very restrictive. To us a much more streamlined and unbiased system would be to have all matters concerning subsidies, dealt with through the Ministry involved in the licensing of daycare. It would then not be a matter

of personalities or politics, but system fair to everyone regardless of the community in which they reside."

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## **TRANSITIONAL GRANTS**

For the past three years, the Ontario Government has been considering ending indirect subsidies, which go to centres instead of parents.

Strong lobbying forced the government to provide transitional grants, which are in a sense temporary funding, to keep money flowing into the centres until a final decision is made about indirect subsidies.

While the government ponders its decision, parents and centres are insecure, knowing neither how much funding there will be, nor how long it will last.

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### **Heather Corner, Supervisor, Child Care Centre, Dryden**

"During the past year and a half as supervisor I have had to lay off staff, reduce staff hours and make budget cuts wherever possible. In order to do this it has meant program changes therefore affecting the children. I received phone calls last fall and this fall from parents who are interested in enrolling their child. One common question is, "What will I be paying in January?" I explained the options open to them, but usually they do not enroll the child until they are sure of what is going to happen."

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**Chris Southcote, Community Activist, Thunder Bay**

"One of the first actions taken by the current government, and as far as I can determine their only major action, was to do away with the so-called "indirect subsidies" of the child care system in Ontario. Although temporary grants were later provided to certain municipalities in order to reduce the immediate negative effects that this would create, this backward step on child care is still the official policy of the government."

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**Northwestern Ontario  
Regional Daycare Committee**

"The threat of closure of our municipal centres has hung heavily over Northwestern Ontario for the past three years and creates enormous stress for day care parents and workers. As the majority of day care in our region is under municipal jurisdiction this, of course, is our key regional issue. The crisis is caused by the elimination of the indirect subsidy that has long supported municipal day care. We consider the transitional grant a reprieve - not a solution.

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**Canadian Union of Public Employees, Thunder Bay**

"Many families pulled their children out of the centres in anticipation of fees that they would be unable to afford; and other families started looking for alternate care for a future date. Some of the "quality" we are so proud of was lost, when

families had to go through the stress of not knowing if a centre would be available for their children, if their children would be transferred or if they could afford the care that their children needed. "

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**Northwestern Ontario  
Regional Daycare Committee, Thunder Bay**

"Without the indirect subsidy/transitional grant, day care user fees will become prohibitive. Without this subsidy/grant, the average Northwestern Ontario family - with an income of approximately \$38,000 - will be required to pay \$13,000-\$14,000 annually for day care. Such fees are impossible.

"If day care centre fees increase, many families will be forced to resort to less expensive, unregulated care. As middle-income families withdraw from the day care centres, the very existence of the centres become tenuous. Many of our centres would close. In small communities, this means that the only regulated, supervised day care service will be lost. Our fears are that without the subsidy/grant, 10 or 11 of our 13 municipal centres could close. This would mean the loss of 475 to 500 day care spaces and the loss of over 80 jobs. "

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## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Chapter Four

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#### SUMMARY

Having heard submissions from more than 170 groups and individuals across Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Labour and Ontario Coalition for Better Daycare have refined some of their views and reaffirmed others.

Obviously, the presentations covered a wide range of aspects of child care. Some addressed specific areas, while others analysed the general needs and deficiencies within the current set of child care programs.

Despite the variety of views presented, there was a recurring theme, around which there was, for the most part, consensus.

Time and again, the panels of child care and trade union representatives receiving submissions heard speakers emphasize the need for a national child care system. The more than 2 million children of working parents are desperately in need of a system that sets standards, meets needs and expectations, is affordable, quality, and accessible.

Glaring holes in the current 'patch work' scheme in this province and others have been talked about and reported in task force reports and media coverage. The OFL/OCBDC campaign provided the forum for personal testimony and community input.

Despite the improvements in Ontario in the last two years, providing more child care spaces (subsidized and non-subsidized), the system remains a non-system -- piecemeal.

Existing subsidies are in danger of being cut. The Ontario Government refuses to make a commitment to fund only non-profit centres. More and more parents are entering the workforce and the already-inadequate 'system' will over the next few years suffer even more pressure.

Those groups in society that advocate quality standards in child care are fully aware that the goal will never be realized in the context of for-profit child care. For-profit centres, by definition, hold profit as their objective. That precludes setting aside questions of money to see that child care facilities, services and funding are in sufficient supply and are divided fairly among working parents.

Even commercial operators who spoke at forums criticized the lack of government commitment to fund child care and set standards. The OFL and OCBDC do not advocate putting commercial operators out of business. Some of them do provide quality care, and some parents would choose private centers even if publicly-run centres were available to them.

Just as parents should be free to send their children to private school, so should they have the choice to send their children to private child care programs.

By extension, just as we do not fund private schools with public dollars, neither should we continue to fund private child care with public dollars. We have proposed to the Ontario Government that transition programs be put in place to assist for-profit centres to convert to non-profit centres in which administrators would earn salaries. Those operators who do not wish to

change over to non-profit operations would forfeit access to public funds.

The need for a quality system of child care is obvious. And it's growing. This report documents the strain on child care centres, operators, and users. Together, they try to make do with dollars that are too few, and demands that are too weighty.

The demand will not lessen in the coming decades. Ontario is a wealthy province -- the second wealthiest in the country. The province does have the capacity to see that children receive the care and attention they desperately need.

The recommendations that follow outline what it will take to put child care higher on the public agenda and build a meaningful, useful system so that working people can go to work with a sense of security, knowing that their children are getting the care they need and deserve.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The objective of child care advocates is to build a comprehensive, high quality, universally-accessible, non-profit, publicly-funded child care system. To achieve this goal, the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care recommend that the government take the following immediate steps:

### **1. Ministry of the Young Child**

Establish a new Ministry of the Young Child to administer children's programs, including child care. This ministry will be solely responsible for the jurisdiction, regulation, administration of child care services and subsidies, thereby eliminating the discretionary municipal role.

## **2. Operational Funding**

Introduce direct funding to non-profit child care programs, equivalent to at least 30 per cent of operating costs.

## **3. Subsidy Qualifications**

Introduce income-testing as the method for determining eligibility for a subsidy, using the federal maximum guidelines as the basis for determining income levels and establishing the principle that all eligible families will receive a subsidy.

## **4. Non-Profit System**

Move to develop a non-profit child care system by:

- (a) Phasing out purchase-of-service agreements with commercial operators;
- (b) Providing direct operating grants to non-profit day care programs only;
- (c) Introducing a program for conversion to non-profit for those commercial operators who wish to continue operating;
- (d) Restrain from proposing changes to the federal government which would allow government subsidies, including Canada Assistance Plans, to be allocated to commercial operators.

## **5. Capital Funding**

Expand the capital funding program to \$50 million a year to cover the cost of new construction, renovations and start-up of non-profit child care programs at the rate of 15,000 spaces a year (adjusted to reflect inflationary increases).

## **6. Pay Equity**

Amend the pay equity legislation to include women in establishments with less than 10 employees and those establishments which are either all-female or which have no appropriate male comparisons. The law, in its present form, excludes 85 per cent of child care workers.

## **7. Parental Leave**

Amend Employment Standards legislation to provide one year's leave for either parent on the birth or adoption of a child. Provision should include full job security and guarantee of no loss of seniority or benefits.

## **8. Comprehensive System**

Employment Standards legislation should allow at least 10 days a year for family reasons and establish a clear, democratic and far-reaching service plan for the future delivery of child care services to meet all Ontario children's needs, including infants and toddlers, school-age children, francophones, children in rural areas, special needs, different racial, cultural and linguistic groups, children of students and shiftworkers and those in emergency situations. This would involve the extensive development of neighbourhood hub models, additional funding to promote and expand such programs and a shift away from reliance on the market place.

## **9. Enforce Regulations**

Show leadership and negotiate with the Government of Canada to ensure a comprehensive,

universally-accessible, high quality, non-profit, publicly-funded child care program which is not based on a welfare model, but based on a universal funding program as recommended by the Katie Cooke Task Force (1986).

This would also involve lobbying the government to include in its national objectives requirements for regulated, comprehensive, non-profit services, as well as clear targets for provinces to provide universally-accessible and affordable programs within a 10-year period. Recognizing that tax deductions and credits play only a small part in making child care financially accessible, the provincial government should lobby the federal government to transfer funds allocated through tax measures to be directed, instead, to direct services.

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## FORUM LOCATIONS

Ontario Child Care Campaign

"Kids, Not Cash: Non-profit Child Care"

<u>City</u>	<u>Date</u>
Ottawa	April 6, 1987
Kingston	April 9, 1987
Windsor	April 13, 1987
London	April 15, 1987
Dryden	April 21, 1987
Thunder Bay	April 23, 1987
Sault Ste. Marie	April 28, 1987
Sudbury	April 30, 1987
Hamilton	May 5, 1987
Peterborough	May 7, 1987
Guelph	May 12, 1987
North Bay	May 14, 1987
Toronto	May 23, 1987

## POLITICAL ACTION AND STUDIES

1. Select Committee on Social Development, 1984
2. Liberal-New Democrat legislative accord (1985), promising reform of day care policy and sufficient funding to recognize child care as a basic public service and not a form of welfare.
3. White paper outlining proposals for a comprehensive child care system, Ontario Liberal Government, 1987. Tabled after two years of lobbying by labour, child care advocates and women.
4. Report of the Task Force on Child Care, federal task force that made an exhaustive analysis of the child care system and made sweeping recommendations for change, 1985.
5. Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care, federal government's national public hearings, 1986.
6. Sharing the Responsibility, a report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care, 1987.
7. Ontario Select Committee on Health, examined commercialization of child care, 1987.

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