

# Alberta Childcare Association Warns of Possible Rolling Childcare Centre Closures

*Industry Operators Deciding Best Course of Action to Protect the Interests of Parents and Children Against a Flawed and Underfunded Affordable Childcare Program*

CALGARY, AB, CANADA, January 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In the heart of Alberta, the [Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs \(ACE\)](#)

represents a vibrant community of both for-profit and non-profit childcare centres and day home operators. Today, we stand at a crossroads, facing challenges that could reshape the future of childcare in our province. As we navigate these uncertain times, ACE is evaluating strategic responses to address the significant concerns surrounding the funding and policies of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Agreement.

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We find ourselves pushed to the brink by policies that threaten the foundation of Alberta's quality, mixed-market childcare industry.”

*Krystal Churcher, Chair*

We extend a heartfelt invitation to parents across Alberta and Canada to join us in advocating for a childcare system that truly reflects the needs of our children and families. This call to action is born from a shared dream of affordable childcare—a vision embraced by ACE members with enthusiasm and dedication, contrary to the divisive narratives sometimes portrayed.

Krystal Churcher, ACE Chair, expresses our collective sentiment: "It's deeply disheartening to confront misleading assertions that suggest our only motive is to raise fees and gouge parents. The reality is far from this. The so-called \$10/day childcare program's underfunding of over \$1 billion, (acknowledged by the federal government's own analyses), as well as the federal government's inflexible program policies, have placed an unbearable strain on our ability to properly serve families. We're in this together, fighting not just for the survival of our centers but for the well-being of the children we care for."

The CWELCC Agreement, as it currently stands, threatens to dilute the quality and diversity of



**ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA  
CHILDCARE ENTREPRENEURS**  
*YOUR CHILD, YOUR CHOICE*

Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs is a not-for-profit comprised of childcare operators from across the province. Its goal is to advocate for choice in childcare that supports both families and operators.

childcare services available to parents. It also completely ignores families who prefer childcare options that are outside of the state-controlled system. The federal government's rigid, one-size-fits-all, government-knows-best approach fails to accommodate the diverse needs of children and their families, a stance that AACE believes undermines the very fabric of Alberta's diverse, mixed market childcare system, as well as family and community-based childcare options that may be preferred by some Albertans.

Childcare is a matter of provincial responsibility, yet it faces undue pressures from federal policies that risk compromising the well-being of our children. There is more, however, that the Government of Alberta can do to help the industry through these challenges. AACE urges the Government of Alberta to intervene with emergency funding to get operators through this government-imposed transition period and to advocate assertively and loudly for flexibility in policy implementation to safeguard our industry's integrity. The federal government's financial support to provinces for affordable childcare comes at an extremely high cost and it's critical for parents to understand the implications.

One of the actions being considered by the Alberta childcare sector is initiating rolling program closures to draw public attention to the adverse effects of an underfunded and poorly developed government program upon childcare quality and choice. This is a measure of last resort, aimed at highlighting the need for a balanced approach that considers the real costs and unintended consequences of government intervention.

"The thought of disrupting families and communities is the last thing we want," Churcher continues. "But we find ourselves pushed to the brink by policies that threaten the foundation of Alberta's quality, mixed-market childcare industry. We hope parents see these potential actions as a plea to protect a system that is vital not only to our children's future but also respects and preserves Alberta's culture, values and beliefs."

Emergency funding is critically needed. However, the childcare sector's plea goes far beyond financial concerns.

A proposed cost control framework is the next policy to be rolled out. Representatives from AACE are grateful to be on the Alberta's Government's committee that is looking at its most effective implementation. However, some of the policy principles around 'core' versus 'enhanced' services seem to already be set, and the inflexible stance on this issue has the childcare industry very concerned.

"Government policy principles regarding 'core' and 'enhanced' childcare services will lead to operational difficulties within centres and potentially cause harm to the social and emotional well-being of children," explained Churcher. "Our association needs to sound the alarm more publicly now to make parents aware of the negative impacts these policies could have on their children. We cannot accept that these decisions have already been made and nothing can be changed."

AACE's ongoing dialogue with the government aims to highlight these critical issues, emphasizing the need for a program that supports all children and families and that highlights the well-being of children as the most important consideration.

"We cannot stand by and allow politicians and special interest groups, who have never spent time working in a childcare centre, to impose policies that will create groups of 'have' and 'have-not' children within a childcare centre," continued Churcher. "Parents need to be made aware of the real cost of the government's approach and the real impact these policies could have on children - this walk out is about both the current challenges facing the sector and the future impact that bad policy will have on our children."

Our commitment to affordable, high-quality childcare remains unwavering. AACE is dedicated to finding solutions that prioritize children's welfare and maintain the excellence of our services. We welcome constructive discussions with the Government to overcome these challenges together.

In unity, we can ensure a future where every child in Alberta has access to the nurturing, supportive, and high-quality childcare they deserve. Let's come together to advocate for a system that values choice, preserves quality, and, above all, protects our children.

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