

AACE Raises Concerns Over Government's Implementation of \$10/Day Childcare

Government's threats of withholding affordability grant payments in a recent Town Hall meeting hit a nerve amongst childcare industry operators

CALGARY, AB, CANADA, June 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs \(AACE\)](#) is voicing significant concerns regarding the Government's ability to implement the \$10/day childcare

program in a manner that ensures childcare quality and the long-term viability of the childcare industry. AACE is making its concerns public following a townhall meeting between government officials and childcare operators, where the government announced plans to send a survey to operators to understand the cost of running childcare centers in the province. Operators were

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informed that affordability grant payments could be withheld if they do not comply with the order to complete the survey.

“Our association has been quiet for the past several months, but we feel the need to speak up following a townhall between industry operators and the Government,” said AACE Chair, Krystal Churcher.

“Threatening to withhold funding from operators in order for the government to understand the true cost of

childcare is not sitting well with the industry. These are the same operators who felt forced to sign this agreement in the first place and now, three years after childcare fees were frozen, they are only just trying to get this data to ensure equitable funding? My phone has been blowing up since the town hall with calls from frustrated childcare operators who say they have had enough. Alberta's childcare operators are now asking what it would look like if the industry collectively decides to opt out of the government's program altogether when agreements come up for renewal next year.”

For the past three years, Alberta's childcare operators have signed agreements in order to



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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.

participate in the affordability grant program to make childcare more affordable for Alberta families. However, because the government ties the affordability grant program to staff wage tops ups and other government support programs that childcare operators rely on to remain financially viable, the 'choice' to sign the agreement is not seen by most operators as a true option.

"Alberta's childcare operators have been all but forced to participate in the affordability grant program and were given the "option" to sign the government's agreement under duress, with limited information and, in the first few years, with only a few days to sign or risk losing all government support payments," added Churcher. "To be told now that this contractually agreed to funding could be withheld if we don't comply with the government's order to hand over our books and our wait lists is disingenuous and offensive. The CWELCC agreement is a hostile takeover of the private sector by the government without compensation or even a basic understanding of the industry they are taking over."

While three years too late, the Association says it appreciates the Government's need to gather information about the true cost of running childcare in Alberta and the Association does not intend to get in the way of the government's efforts. However, the Association also says it will not stand by idly while threats are being made and the poorly devised and implemented program continues to devastate the industry and its ability to deliver high quality childcare to Alberta families.

"Nothing that was said at the townhall meeting gave operators confidence in the future of childcare in Alberta or earned back the trust between operators and the government. The fact that the government does not know the cost of running childcare three years after they froze fees is extremely concerning," continued Churcher. "AACE and its members remain deeply concerned that the \$10/day childcare program will not end well for childcare operators and will end up, like most government 'investments,' as a gross misuse of taxpayer dollars."

The Association warns that despite media attention over the past couple years about the flawed rollout of the \$10/day childcare program, the real fight between industry and government is coming soon as the Government moves forward with its proposed Cost Control Framework. The association says that the concept of cost control has been proven to be a flawed one in the past and its members are struggling to understand how a conservative government in Alberta could believe that cost control will suddenly work in childcare.

"The government seeks financial information from childcare operators to implement the 'cost control framework,' claiming it's necessary for private operators to join the CWELCC agreement," stated Churcher. "However, AACE believes economists and real-life experiences worldwide prove cost control measures are ineffective. The industry will use all available means to fight this policy in Alberta."

Churcher added, "Cost control is a flawed concept, borrowed from past attempts to control rent

costs, which have always failed, reducing both supply and quality. I don't know how any reasonable person could look at what is happening with childcare and not see the same outcome happening."

AACE strongly urges the Alberta Government to reconsider its role in the CWELCC agreement with Canada, criticizing the 'announce victory first, sort details later' approach to childcare affordability. AACE calls for genuine collaboration to develop a sustainable, made-in-Alberta solution for childcare affordability.

"The government often declares victory without understanding the implications of their announcements, leading to acceptance of poor past decisions," said Churcher. "Alberta's childcare industry rejects this approach and will push back against all levels of government until a plan preserving childcare quality and parent choice is established. The Government of Canada and provincial governments signed agreements without consulting the industry, and we will not allow high-quality childcare to be destroyed."

AACE urges the Government of Alberta to lead by adding the Canada Wide Early Learning and Childcare (CWELCC) Agreements to the next Federal-Provincial meetings. After consulting with childcare operators nationwide, it's clear the \$10/day program causes challenges and growing waitlists in every province. The Association urges all provincial government leaders to step up and demand change before it's too late. For more information, visit AACE's website.

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