

AACE National Launches National Awareness Week to Advocate for Urgent Childcare Reform

Week's activities to include advocacy urging Government of Canada to empower provincial autonomy in childcare, with possibility of rolling closures.

CALGARY, ALBERTA, CANADA, October 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- AACE National, a National Committee of both nonprofit and for-profit childcare operators established by the Association of Alberta Childcare Entrepreneurs (AACE), begins the kickoff of National Awareness Week, scheduled to take place from October 21 to 25, 2024. This week-long campaign aims to raise awareness about the urgent need for reform in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreements. Parents and community members are encouraged to offer support to raise awareness via a petition and letter-writing campaigns, while operators also engage in social media actions and optional rolling closures of programs.



The week will see the launch of a range of advocacy initiatives to educate the public to properly meet the promises of affordable, high-quality, and accessible childcare services that align with the diverse needs of Canadian families. With well over 10,000 expected to participate in the campaign nationwide, childcare providers, parents, and advocates from across the country will be brought together to call for meaningful change in federal childcare funding. Empowering provincial autonomy in childcare approaches will ensure that all Canadian families truly have equitable access to the program's promises of sustainable, high-quality care, and that parents continue to have choice when it comes to finding a childcare provider that meets their individual family needs.

"Operators all want affordable childcare to still be available for parents. We need to ensure, though, that childcare is affordable, but not at the expense of quality or parent choice," said



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Krystal Churcher

Krystal Churcher, Childcare Centre Director in Alberta and Co-Chair of AACE National. “National Awareness Week is about shining a light on the scrutinized spending of the upcoming cost control model and the challenges it poses to operators, families, and the broader community. We are calling for reforms that respect provincial autonomy and reflect the real costs of providing high-quality childcare, so that we can tackle this access crisis for parents and let them get back to work.”

Major advocacy events planned include:

Queen’s Park, Toronto: Tuesday, October 22, 2024, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm EST

Online parent info meeting: Tuesday, October 22, 2024, from 7:00 pm EST

Parliament Hill, Ottawa: Thursday, October 24, 2024, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm EST

National Awareness Week comes at a critical time, as childcare operators across the country face dire financial strains under the current system. The CWELCC program, while well-intentioned, has placed undue burdens on Canada’s mixed-market childcare providers, many of whom are now at risk of closure due to inadequate funding, excessive bureaucratic burden, and unreasonable policy directives. AACE National believes that reinstating provincial jurisdiction and empowering provincial governments to design childcare solutions tailored to their populations will lead to more sustainable and effective outcomes.

“The federal government is putting ideology and policy before children, excluding and discriminating against the very women-led entrepreneurs who have been relied upon to serve the majority of Canada’s families for the past several decades,” Churcher added. “By forcing an inflexible, one-size-fits-all public centralized system, they are ignoring the voices of parents, educators, and operators—the real stakeholders in childcare.”

On the other side of Canada, Ontario childcare centre director Zoe Prassoulis echoes Churcher’s concerns about government overreach. “We all want families—especially middle-and low-income families—to have access to affordable care. But there’s no need for the government to take over our operations. Let them fund the families directly, and we’ll take care of the rest.”

“Childcare industry is heavily represented by women, and most who are marginalized,” said Kingston, Ontario-based operator Deepa Mansharamani-Martell. “Over the years, we’ve poured our heart, our souls, our tears—everything—into providing childcare. We want equity, respect, honesty and transparency from our government. Every Canadian family should have the freedom to choose any childcare that meets their values, standards, and needs, without limitations. We want affordability, quality care, and accessibility.”

“Parents already get monthly Child Tax Credits that are income-based,” says Angela Wood, a day home operator in Ontario. “There's no reason why this avenue cannot be used to qualify and fund parents for their chosen method of childcare. The funding should never have gone through so many hands only to help reduce 30% of Canadian parents' daycare fees. Give parents back the choice of whatever kind of childcare suits their family needs.”

“The one-size-fits-all funding approach imposed by CWELCC has left rural centres like mine completely out of the equation,” says Anya Kerr, another director of centres in both Alberta and Ontario. “From the current revenue-replacement model to the new cost-based funding model, the unique needs and expenses of centres in remote areas cannot be met. We've already had to make cuts to our quality programs, services for families, and nutrition costs, which goes against our founding philosophy. With the proposed changes, we will have to lay off staff who are needed to support inclusion of special needs children and make further cuts to our programs, all of which parents have offered to pay for through donations. This completely defeats the purpose of the CWELCC system, with affordability being canceled out by parents asking to cover these ineligible expenses. If none of the key goals of the system are being met, it is a failure for all Canadian families.”

“Finding space in daycare has become increasingly difficult; a sentiment echoed by many of my colleagues,” remarks a parent of a child at Stepping Stone Early Learning Academy in Ontario who attended AACE National's Canada-wide online meeting of 1,200 parents on October 17. “It appears we've shifted from one extreme to another. My concern is that, in attempting to address affordability, the daycares themselves may be facing undue strain. The last thing any of us would want is for the quality of care to be compromised, whether through reduced resources, inadequate equipment, or insufficient compensation for staff. It's imperative that, in making childcare accessible, we ensure the sustainability of the daycare sector so that the well-being of the children and the livelihoods of the employees are not jeopardized.”

About AACE National:

The AACE National Committee on Childcare Reform is leading the effort to shift from federally-controlled funding to no-strings-attached envelope provincial funding, empowering provinces to create childcare solutions that ensure affordability, accessibility, quality and parent choice. AACE National encompasses thousands of childcare operators from across Canada who have come together to raise awareness about the devastating impact that the Canada Wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement (CWELCC) is having on the childcare industry, on childcare quality and parental choice.

For more information on National Awareness Week events and to register for the second national parent meeting on October 22, visit aacenational.ca.

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