

Operators Rally at Queen's Park To Raise Awareness About Flawed Childcare Program Rollout

Protest targets devastating impacts of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement on Childcare Operators.

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, October 23, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Over 1,000 people, including for profit, nonprofit and home-based childcare operators, educators, and parents, gathered at Queen's Park yesterday to protest the Ontario government's changes to the funding formula in line with the federal government's \$10-a-day childcare program under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) agreement.



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The protest, organized in partnership with AACE National, a newly formed childcare advocacy group that represents nearly 150,000 or roughly 16% of the over 900,000 licensed childcare spaces in Canada, voiced operators' frustrations over the planned rollout of a new funding formula, set to begin in Ontario on January 1, 2025. Childcare operators have until October 31, 2024 to opt into the new funding formula, despite having hundreds of unanswered questions and concerns. Operators are feeling forced to opt in since, if they don't, they will automatically lose subsidies for low income families and wage top-ups for their staff. The illusion of choice being created by the government is frustrating operators, who believe these funding formulas are too important to rush into without adequate dialogue and understanding about their impacts.

Several daycares across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) closed their doors to participate in the rally, with operators warning that the new funding model could lead to reduced service quality and possible permanent closures. Many parents, left scrambling for alternative childcare arrangements, expressed their solidarity, understanding the precarious position these centers are in.



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“We’re thrilled with today’s turnout, support from parents, and our ability to raise awareness about these important issues,” said AACE National Co-Chair Krystal Churcher. “While we recognize the need to ensure affordable childcare for all Canadian families, this heavy-handed government intervention into the sector is counterproductive and irresponsible. The planned shift in Ontario’s funding formula is a serious threat to the viability of independent childcare centres and operators are frustrated by the illusion of choice that the Ontario Government is providing, when in fact operators are being forced to opt-in or lose other important government

subsidies.”

MPPs Chris Glover (Spadina-Fort York) and Aislinn Clancy (Kitchener Centre) addressed the crowd at the protest, emphasizing the need for further dialogue and consultation between the government and private operators. Both urged for a balanced approach that would allow the childcare sector to thrive without sacrificing quality or independence.

The rally follows weeks of tension as letters from daycare centres warned parents that fees could soar if the government does not reconsider the funding formula. Many operators have threatened to withdraw from the national childcare program, which could see parent fees return to upwards of \$2,000 a month if changes are not made. If the Government of Ontario does not change course and remove the opt-in date of October 31 for operators, parents should expect that many operators will decide not to opt in, resulting in drastic increases in childcare costs and loss of subsidies for low income families.

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 about AACE National, issues related to the rollout of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement or the National Awareness Week, visit aacenational.ca.

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