

ACE Calls on Federal Government to Remove the Cap Blocking Ontario Families from Licensed Childcare

The 30% limit on for-profit operators is turning away qualified providers and leaving families without spaces

TORONTO, ONT, CANADA, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE) is calling on the federal government to remove the cap that limits for-profit childcare operators to 30% of spaces under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program, a restriction that is costing Ontario families real access to affordable care.

Municipalities across Ontario are being forced to turn down thousands of licensed, qualified childcare spaces simply because of the ownership structure of the operators behind them. Families who need affordable care are left on waitlists while qualified providers are left on the sidelines.

"Ontario families need childcare spaces, not ownership tests," said Ron Craig, Director of the Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs. "Every licensed provider in this province meets the same standards and serves the same families. We are calling on the federal government to remove this cap so that qualified operators can get back to doing what they do best, delivering quality, affordable care to the children and families who need it."

Every licensed childcare provider in Ontario, regardless of ownership structure, is accountable to the same provincial licensing authority. That means the same licensing requirements, the same health and safety standards, the same staff qualifications, the same ratios, and the same regulatory oversight. Ownership tells you how an organization is governed. Licensing tells you how it must operate. Quality tells you how children are cared for. These are three different things, and policy should not confuse them.





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*Ron Craig, Director of the
Association of Canadian Early
Learning Programs*

The claim that non-profit operators consistently deliver higher quality care relies on research that is largely observational, reflects earlier time periods, and does not account for the many variables that shape outcomes, including geography, facility costs, and staffing models. Quality comes from strong leadership, qualified educators, safe environments, and compliance with provincial licensing requirements. Quality has no ownership model. A

space is a space in childcare.

Ontario has created roughly 41,000 of the 86,000 new spaces committed under CWELCC, with the deadline approaching and no new expansion funding available in 2026. Continuing to exclude qualified licensed operators from contributing to that goal is not a strategy. It is an obstacle.

ACE supports the goal of affordable, high-quality childcare for Ontario families. Achieving that goal requires every licensed operator, regardless of ownership structure, to have an equal opportunity to participate. The 30% cap should be removed.

About the Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs

The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE) is a national coalition representing licensed childcare providers across Canada, including home-based programs, non-profit centres, and privately owned operators. ACE advocates for a childcare system that is sustainable, accessible, and high-quality for all Canadian families, and for funding frameworks that treat every licensed provider equitably regardless of business structure.

Krystal Churcher, Chair

The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE)

+1 780-838-3103

kchurcher@acenational.ca

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