

ACE Welcomes CFIB'S Call for Swift Action to Restore Parent Choice and Fair Competition in Alberta Early Learning Sector

CALGARY, AB, CANADA, August 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The

Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE) welcomes today's call by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) urging the Government of Alberta to address the unintended consequences of the current Child Care Affordability Grant on Alberta's licensed preschool sector.

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ACE agrees that government policy should not place one group of Alberta entrepreneurs at a competitive disadvantage through inequitable funding. The current funding model has created an uneven playing field between licensed preschools and licensed daycares offering comparable part-time care.

"Alberta says it believes in choice for healthcare and education, but that principle isn't carrying over to childcare right now," said Keyli Loepky, CFIB's Senior Director, Alberta & Interprovincial Affairs. "Parents should be able to choose a preschool for their child without government funding pushing them toward one option and picking winners and losers. With September only weeks away, the province has a narrow window to fix this before more preschools that have served their communities for decades are gone for good."

CFIB's analysis points to the funding structure itself as the source of the imbalance.

"Preschools are being funded at less than half the hourly rate of daycares for the same kind of part-time care, and that gap is causing these small businesses to close their doors," said Kayode Southwood, CFIB's Senior Policy Analyst for Alberta. "The province needs to level the playing field before more small business owners are forced to do the same, and Albertan families end up with less choice for childcare."

ACE's Alberta Preschool Sustainability Survey shows the scale of the impact. Among participating operators, 74% reported declining enrolment, 81% said families are choosing daycare because of lower fees, nearly half reported their preschool is no longer financially sustainable, and nearly

half anticipate closing if the funding model remains unchanged.

"Ninety-eight percent of the preschool operators we surveyed say this funding model has tilted the playing field against them," said Krystal Churcher, Chair of the Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE). "That's not a fringe concern, that's a sector telling government, in near-unanimous terms, that the current approach isn't working. Alberta families are the ones who lose when a licensed option disappears simply because government made it harder to afford."

Many of the affected preschools were built by local entrepreneurs, educators, churches, and community organizations that invested in their

neighbourhoods over decades, offering part-time programming alongside full-time daycare options across the province. With most preparing to welcome children back this September, ACE is urging the Government of Alberta to act before the school year begins. Once a licensed preschool closes, it rarely reopens.

ACE is calling on the Government of Alberta to implement equitable, prorated Child Care Affordability Grant funding for licensed preschools offering comparable part-time programming. This would preserve affordability for families, restore fair competition among licensed providers, and ensure parents, not funding formulas, determine which early learning program best meets their child's needs.

"Affordability and parental choice should never be competing priorities," said Churcher. "Alberta can make early learning more affordable while preserving the diversity of licensed programs families depend on. But without action before this school year begins, we risk permanently losing community-based preschools and the choices Alberta families have relied on for generations."

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About ACE

The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE) is a national coalition of licensed



ACE Alberta is a Member of the Canadian Coalition of Childcare Operators

childcare providers, including home-based programs, nonprofits, and private centres, advocating for a childcare system that is sustainable, accessible, and affordable for families across Canada.

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