

'Feeling invisible': Parents tell ACE National town hall they want a say in the future of child care

ACE calls on governments to include parents and operators in what comes next

CALGARY, AB, CANADA, October 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Parents and child care operators from across Canada joined ACE's town hall on September 24 to discuss affordability, access and the future of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program.

Their experiences varied widely. One parent who has been unable to find an affordable space described herself as "feeling invisible" within CWELCC. Parents in Toronto with \$22-a-day spaces compared getting one to winning the lottery, and said they worry future policy changes could take that affordability away.

"Parents who have an affordable space are afraid of losing it. Parents who cannot get one are wondering when their children will matter in this system," said Krystal Churcher, Board Chair and Executive Director, ACE. "Both experiences deserve to be heard. Our responsibility is to build a system that provides stability for families already receiving support while opening the door to those who remain excluded."

Operators described the difficulty of sustaining quality programs under current funding restrictions and policy requirements. Some face barriers to expansion, while others are seeing declining enrolment and unused capacity.

Participants discussed a "funding follows the child" approach, where families receive affordability funding and use it at the eligible licensed provider of their choice. ACE says this could make better use of existing licensed spaces in Ontario and other provinces. The group also discussed



**A Canadian Coalition Of
Childcare Operators**

A Canadian Coalition of Childcare Operators



Parent Night

Hosted by ACE (Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs)



Governments cannot continue to stand at podiums celebrating the success of CWELCC without standing beside the parents who remain left out."

*Krystal Churcher, Board Chair
and Executive Director, ACE*

tying expansion to local demand, since some communities in Alberta and British Columbia have more spaces than they can fill while rural and underserved areas have too few. Income-tested assistance was raised as a way to direct more funding to lower-income families while keeping fees stable for families who already rely on them.

Alberta's current agreement expires March 31, 2027. Since the town hall, Canada and Ontario have announced a four-year extension, committing nearly \$12 billion in federal funding through March 2031.

However, Ontario's commitment to maintain current parent fees, an average of \$19 a day and capped at \$22, extends only to June 30, 2027. Families still need answers about what they will pay beginning July 1 and how those outside the program will gain access to affordable care. British Columbia has paused new provider enrolment in its \$10-a-day program while continuing to fund existing participants.

ACE is calling on provincial and federal governments to directly involve parents and frontline operators in the next phase of child care policy. That includes families who have secured affordable care, families still searching, and the operators who deliver and expand services.

"Governments cannot continue to stand at podiums celebrating the success of CWELCC without standing beside the parents who remain left out, the parents who told us they feel 'invisible' in this program. Their experiences must count when governments measure success. Every funding announcement should answer a simple question for those parents: what changes for my family, and when?" said Churcher.

On growth, ACE says the answer will look different from one community to the next.

"Governments must plan around local demand, children's ages, family needs and workforce capacity, with parents and frontline operators helping shape those decisions. Success should be measured by whether families can access the care they need and whether the programs delivering it can stay viable," Churcher added.

Parents and operators can add their voice at <https://yourchildcare.ca/>.

policy discussions and advocates for accessible, affordable and sustainable quality child care.

Krystal Churcher, Chair

The Association of Canadian Early Learning Programs (ACE)

+ +1 780-838-3103

kchurcher@acenational.ca

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/946686400>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.