

July 22, 2008

Hon. Dalton McGuinty, Premier  
Legislative Assembly, Queen's Park  
M7A 1A1

RE: Ontario College Child Care Centres

Dear Premier,

Perhaps the most important job in our society is that of caring for our children – our future. And while nearly everyone would pay lip service to the importance of child care and early childhood education, any attempt to pay child care and ECE workers like the important workers they are is met with comments about 'competitiveness.'

Choice among these were comments made by the president of St. Lawrence College, Chris Whitaker, on closing the Early Childcare Centre at St. Lawrence College: While he says (as quoted in the media) "We're paying people as they should be paid in our society," he concludes: "If we were paying folks similar wages to (those paid at) private centres, it might be viable."

What should be the norm – a near 'living' wage for child care and ECE workers – is seen as the gross exception. The lip service is there, but when it comes to society truly valuing this service, there is always someone willing to come in and 'look after' our children for less-than-minimum wage, no benefits, and no employment standards.

On your party's web site, you promise women that they will not be alone –that your government will be there for them. But there has been no assistance from either of the two ministries that could help - Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Given your promise, explain how this government could allow these spaces to close, after 40 years of operation, this July 31. Clearly, we should be opening new spaces for the staff and students, not closing the existing ones. The closure of the centre at St. Lawrence College centre will save only \$143,000 - a pittance compared to what it would cost to create new spaces. It should be a simple matter for either of these ministries to ensure the centre remains open.

Last week, a community protest brought this to the attention of the people of Kingston. Women and families are depending on you to ensure the centre is saved. But they need your help.

Similar centres are closing at Canadore College in North Bay and St. Clair College in Windsor. I am calling on you to intervene to ensure that the college child care centres remain open.

Sincerely,



Patty Rout,  
First Vice-President/Treasurer