

March 17, 2010

The Honourable Dalton McGuinty
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Sent by fax (416) 325-3745

Dear Premier:

I am writing to urge your government to not cut \$63.5 million in funding for subsidized child care spaces. The ripple effect of cutting this funding would be catastrophic for our fragile child care system. The impact has been quantified by the Centre for Spatial Economics:

- The disappearance of 7,600 subsidized child care spaces for children from low-income families;
- The elimination of 1,800 child care jobs and another 1,100 jobs in the related economy;
- Another 3,480 jobs vacated as parents are forced to leave work because they have no other child care options; and
- Growing welfare rolls as out of work parents turn to social assistance.

The study, commissioned by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), shows that the \$63.5 million cut would result in a drop in Ontario's GDP of \$148.3 million through job losses and an increased demand for welfare.

I would like to congratulate your government on the decision to offer full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds beginning September 2010.

However, the province must ensure the current system remains stable as full-day learning is phased in province-wide over the next five years. As you know, Dr. Charles Pascal recommended in his June 2009 report *With Our Future In Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario*: "The province should make it clear to municipal partners that it will secure continued support from the federal government to the original Best Start Funding base or replace federal funding with provincial resources to ensure stability."

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We support the call by child care advocates to use the savings that will be realized from full-day learning. The province has calculated savings of \$119 million in public child care costs as four- and five-year-olds move into the full-day programs operated by schools. This money should be used to fund existing child care programs and expand learning and care options for younger children.

The effects of the recession are still being felt by Ontarians. Laid-off workers are turning to social assistance in rising numbers as they exhaust their federal employment insurance benefits. The ability to access affordable child care is a critical factor for individuals, particularly women, to re-enter or stay in the workforce. Cutting this key public investment will only make it harder for families to get back to work.

Creating and preserving good jobs and strengthening public services are how our province will pay down the deficit and rebuild our economy.

OPSEU adds our voice to those of parents and child care advocates across our province. Premier, don't abandon Ontario's children and families in this year's provincial budget. Invest \$63.5 million to support subsidized child care spaces and provide stable funding to the child care system to support the transition to full-day learning.

Sincerely,



Warren (Smokey) Thomas
President

WT/mp

cc: Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance
Laurel Broten, Minister of Children and Youth Services
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care