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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **REGULATORY AMENDMENTS A NECESSARY STEP TO PRESERVING ACCESS TO LICENSED CARE**

**Toronto:** On January 26<sup>th</sup>, the Government of Ontario began consultations aimed at modernizing the Day Nurseries Act (DNA). This legislation regulates licensed childcare in Ontario and has not had a major update since 1980. ADCO members have participated in these discussions and recognize their necessity.

"With the introduction of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, many of Ontario's daycares are concerned about their ability to continue operating," notes Kim Yeaman, ADCO co-president and the owner of Simcoe Child Care Services in Innisfil. "Care for four- and five-year-olds helps offset the costs of caring for younger children. Part of this is due to aspects of the DNA that make it uneconomical to offer services for children under 3.8 years of age."

"The Province has taken the right step by seeking input from licensed operators, ECEs and parents about updating the Act," notes Yeaman. "I attended one of the consultations earlier this week. MCYS staff had researched other jurisdictions and put forward a number of possible DNA amendments for participants to discuss. They emphasized that the meeting was just a starting point and welcomed input from everyone who attended."

While ADCO has had some discussions with Ministry staff and offered some suggestions, it is still working with its members to ratify a formal recommendation document. "We're discussing a variety of suggestions for updating the legislation, including suggestions around the physical facilities of child care programs, paperwork requirements for operators, how age groups are defined and in some cases, child/staff ratios," says Yeaman. "The goal is to ensure quality by bearing in mind children's developmental milestones, while at the same time giving licensed child care centres some additional flexibility in terms of keeping care for younger children affordable and available for parents across the province."

ADCO represents both commercial and non-profit child care operators. Over 80% of its member centres are single site operations. In most cases, the founder of the facility is an ECE who actually works in the centre each day. "We recognize that without minor amendments to the DNA, licensed care for children under 3.8 years old will become unavailable or unaffordable in many communities," says Yeaman. "We believe that by working together, parents, operators and government can develop solutions that will preserve access to high quality, centre-based care in all communities."

"To not do so will result in higher parent fees, up to 20 – 25% per day, which reflects the true cost of caring for the youngest children," adds Yeaman. "Many small centres will close, as most families won't be able to afford such a sharp increase in costs. This could leave rural communities with no regulated childcare options at all and could substantially lower the number of spaces available in larger urban areas. The last thing anybody wants is for working families to be forced to turn to unregulated, illegal street corner care."

-30-

**For more information, please contact the Association of Daycare Operators of Ontario (ADCO) Co-President Kim Yeaman at 705-431-2407 or [simcoechildcare@rogers.com](mailto:simcoechildcare@rogers.com).**