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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE--October 27th, 2009**

### **ONTARIO'S LICENSED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS VOICE CONCERNS & OPTIMISM**

**Toronto:** Members of Ontario's largest child care association, the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO) expressed both concern and optimism in response to Premier Dalton McGuinty's announcement about full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds earlier today.

"As educators, we're always pleased by steps to make services for children more readily accessible," says Greg Humphreys, Director of Alpha Child Care in Caledon and ADCO Past President. "Licensed child care is a very necessary service, particularly in tough economic times, when parents may be facing increased demands at work." Humphreys, whose family has run Alpha Child Care for more than 30 years, remains concerned, however, that the introduction of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds may have a negative impact on the availability and cost of care for older and younger children.

"If four- and five-year-olds are removed from the licensed child care centres where they're currently cared for, operators will need to renovate their centres, adjust their programming and possibly add staff before they can fill those spaces with children in other age groups," says Humphreys. "While most centres are willing to do that if it means better access to child care for the community as a whole, they may have to raise their per diem rates to cover these costs."

"Our members are telling us that staff shortages and conversion costs are serious concerns," says Bonnie Walraven, President of ADCO. "In many areas, particularly rural, Northern and Aboriginal areas, it's already difficult to get qualified staff. If small non-profit and private day care centres have to add staff to care for children in younger age groups where the staff/child ratios are higher, or have to compete with schools boards for personnel, finding enough staff to keep their doors open may be even tougher. We're confident that the Province is aware of these challenges and look forward to working closely with Provincial officials to overcome these issues in the coming weeks and months."

The Association of Daycare Operators of Ontario (ADCO) is a not-for-profit organization that brings the owners and managers of Ontario's licensed child care programs together to enhance child care quality and achieve common goals. Its members include licensed centre-based programs, home child care agencies, nursery schools, preschools and before- and after-school programs. With nearly 400 members, including both commercial and not-for-profit childcare programs, some of which operate in multiple locations, ADCO is the single largest child care association in Ontario.

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***For more information, please contact the Association of Daycare Operators of Ontario (ADCO) President Bonnie Walraven at 519-377-0341 or bwalraven@adco-o.on.ca.***