



PO BOX 208, Foxboro ON K0K 2B0
Kathy Graham, CEO
admin@adco-o.on.ca
Tel: 613-395-6111
Toll Free: 800.567.7075
Fax: 613.395.6223

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CHILD CARE OPERATORS AND PARENTS JOIN FORCES FOR FAIRNESS IN CHILD CARE POLICY

The National Family Childcare Association (NFCA) and the Canadian Child Care Management Association (CCCMA) have reached an historical agreement designed to help federal, provincial and municipal policymakers develop fair, inclusive and cost-effective child care policies for every family whether using licensed childcare facilities or staying at home. This landmark agreement was formally announced in Toronto last week at the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario annual spring luncheon, which also featured presentations by Ontario child care critics Lisa MacLeod (PC) and Andrea Horwath (NDP).

The NFCA/CCCMA agreement details principles that gives all parents choice in childcare without placing undue financial burdens on taxpayers. It commits both associations to advocate for the following:

- Parental choice should be available through financial equalization factors and taxation by way of a model of a childcare benefit voucher system similar to the Australia model recognizing the four parental choices of: parent/partner/guardian in the family home; care by a relative; regulated private-home day care; licensed day home, child care centre, nursery school or preschool/kindergarten facility. The signatories agree that parental choice is the cornerstone for all decisions
- Taxation must view the family unit as a whole and follow a 'family taxation' policy giving stay-at-home families and single parents the opportunity to equalize taxation and must also allow families of dual income to income splitting. All policies must be voluntary to family perspective.
- All tax credits must be provided for provisions for equalization of all parents regardless of parental choice in childcare.
- Governments must separate funding parental childcare choice initiatives from capital funding plans, thereby demonstrating the necessity to address childcare in both contexts.
- Expansion of licensed childcare spaces should follow the model established in Nova Scotia (circa 2007) with low cost loans and cost-sharing grant, encouraging the development of both commercial and non-profit programs licensed programs. This model provides credible, accountable use of taxpayer money and expands parental choice options.

The NFCA and the CCCMA believe that every family is unique and must retain the right to choose how they care for their children. "A family's child care choice is deeply personal. There will never be a one-size-fits-all solution, so what we need to do is to create an environment that makes it possible for families to make the choices that work best for them," says Kathy Graham, Publicist, Canadian Child Care Management Association.

"It's time to put a stop to the mommy wars and recognize that every family is different. Governments have the capacity to offer this kind of flexibility and they should. After all, they work for us, not the other way around," says Sara Landriault, President of the National Family Childcare Association.

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Further information or interviews, please contact:
Sara Landriault: 613-258-4854 or 613-720-6609 (cell)
landriault@ripnet.com
www.careofthechild.com

Kathy Graham: 613-395-6111
kgraham@adco-o.on.ca
www.childcaredtoday.ca

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