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INDEPENDENT LICENSED CHILD CARE PROGRAMS REACT TO PROVINCIAL BAN ON WAIT LIST FEES

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO- August 1, 2016— The reaction from Ontario's independent licensed child care centres was mixed in response to the Province's new ban on child care wait list fees. "It appears that only a small minority of licensed child care centres actually charge families a fee to be on a wait list," says Greg Humphreys, government relations committee co-chair, Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO). "However, those that do may well be doing so to help off-set the costs associated with managing the wait list."

In areas of high child care demand, it's not unusual for parents to place their name on the wait lists of more than a dozen centres. Once they find care, they don't always call centres back to let them know they no longer need a space. The result is that it can take centre staff many hours to work their way through the wait list, to ensure the principle of first-come, first-served is observed. If each family is given 24 to 48 hours to respond, the process of filling a space can take up to two weeks. The task is so onerous, some centres have moved away from even having a wait list, instead turning to social media and online apps that match families in need of care with licensed centres that have spaces available.

"Wait lists and wait list fees are symptomatic of larger issues. We need to make it easier for existing licensed child care centres to expand and new licensed centres to open," says Andrea Hannen, Operations Manager with ADCO. "We'd like to work with the Ministry of Education to help make this happen. There are so many would-be entrepreneurs who would like to open new licensed centres. Most of them are Registered Early Childhood Educators, certified teachers or other individuals with advanced credentials in education. Most of them want to open in areas of high demand, particularly the GTA, Peel, Halton and York. Provided they can find space that is zoned for day care, it can still take them up to two years to get the municipal and Ministry approvals they require to get their doors open."

"Choice matters a great deal to parents when it comes to licensed child care. Choice is also a great antidote to wait list fees," says Humphreys. "Leveling the playing field for funding, and eliminating some of the red tape associated with expanding an existing centre or opening a new one would allow Ontario to offer families greater choice in child care and create more licensed spaces without any new money from taxpayers, or even the federal government. It's a win-win for everybody."

For further information on the work done by the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario, please visit <http://www.adco-o.on.ca/>.

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For further information, please contact:
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ABOUT US

The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario is comprised of the owners/operators of independent licensed child care centres across the province. Some of its member centres are operated as small businesses and some as community-based not-for-profit corporations. ADCO Members include centre-based programs, nursery schools, preschools and school age operations, as well as licensed home child care agencies. It is estimated that independent licensed child care centres account for over half of all of the licensed child care spaces in Ontario.