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LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTRES MAY NOT SURVIVE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO—March 31, 2020—As Ontario’s licensed child care centres face at least another two weeks of being closed due to the COVID-19 state of emergency, some owner/operators and boards are questioning whether their centres will re-open at all.

“The centres that have been hardest hit are small, owner-managed businesses and stand-alone not-for-profits,” says Andrea Hannen, Executive Director of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO). “Some have rent or mortgage payments due tomorrow and simply can’t pay. Even if they’re able to defer payments, they question their ability to carry this additional debt without raising parent fees to a point where their services are unaffordable. It’s heartbreaking that all of their hard work, the hard work of their staff teams and their dedication to the families they serve may suddenly just end.”

“At this point, their only hope is that the Province will recognize that keeping licensed child care centres afloat is an important part of facilitating Ontario’s economic recovery once the pandemic has subsided,” says Hannen. “So far, we’ve seen no indication that a Provincial plan is in the works, but recognize that they’re juggling multiple urgent priorities. We just hope they’ll come through in time to save these centres.”

The situation may be complicated by the fact that since the Harris/Eves era, all provincial funding for licensed child care centres is funnelled through Ontario’s 47 upper-tier municipalities. With many municipalities shutting down all but the most essential services such as waste pick-up, some child care centres question whether their municipality would even be able to administer any provincial aid that was made available for licensed child care centres, and wonder if there is any alternative mechanism by which they could receive provincial support.

ADCO has reached out to the Province to offer its help in addressing the challenges facing Ontario’s licensed child care centres. “We hope that the provincial government will recognize that every licensed child care centre is a vital part of dozens of families’ lives and will do everything it can to make sure these centres are able to re-open once the current health crisis has passed,” says Hannen. “Families need this kind of certainty right now.”

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ADCO is the industry association for Ontario’s independent licensed child care centres. Independent licensed child care centres are those that are not run by public sector entities such as municipalities or school boards, or by large multi-service agencies such as YMCAs. While independent licensed child care centres may be run as businesses, not-for-profits or co-ops, their core business is licensed child care. Independent licensed child care centres account for more than a third of Ontario’s licensed child care spaces. Many are run as small businesses, owned and operated by women.

For further information, please contact:
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