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MAJORITY OF FAMILIES ARE EXCLUDED BY NEW FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL CHILD CARE AGREEMENTS

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO—September 2, 2021— Across the country, parents have heard that the federal government has signed child care agreements with various provincial governments. What parents may not realize is that the federal government's proposed child care plan isn't expected to be fully implemented until 2025 and the centre they currently rely on may not be included as part of it.

In Ontario, licensed child care centres run as small businesses account for about a quarter of Ontario's licensed child care spaces. Most are owned and operated by women. Many are ECEs, certified teachers, or have other advanced credentials in child health and development. There has been a strident and relentless effort to vilify these women by lobby groups that would prefer to see a government-run system of universal child care imposed across the country. These lobby groups don't want parents to know that all licensed child care centres, whether run as businesses or by not-for-profits, are regularly licensed and inspected, and are legally bound to follow the same rules and regulations. They also don't want parents to consider alternatives to government-directed child care options.

Various groups have been pressuring provincial politicians to sign onto the national child care plan proposed in the federal government's 2021 budget. In Ontario, some municipal officials have also joined this chorus, anticipating the financial windfall this could mean for their child care bureaucracies. By contrast, the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO) has urged the Province to be mindful of both the long-term costs of such an agreement and the need to respect parental choice.

[Research by the non-partisan think tank Cardus](#) indicates that the costs of implementing the promised program have been underestimated and that the actual annual costs could be as much as four times higher than Canadians are being told. This could leave provinces that sign onto the federal plan stuck with decisions about how to make up the shortfall—either by increasing parent fees, restricting access to services or finding other ways to cut costs. Cardus estimates that if Ontario were to sign a similar agreement, the province's taxpayers could be left on the hook for some \$9.5 billion annually.

The Child Care Providers Resource Network reports that 75% of children under the age of 12 are in the care of a parent, relative, independent home child care provider or an in-home nanny.

"All families need extra support while Ontario recovers from the pandemic," says Andrea Hannen, ADCO's executive director. "Direct supports to families are the most efficient way to do this, because parents know better than governments what works best for them. They're also more equitable. A hundred per cent of the taxpayer money allocated for child care shouldn't go only to the small minority of families that are using the federal government's preferred form of care."

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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. Most are small businesses, owned and operated by women.

For further information, please contact:
Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO)
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