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NEW ONTARIO CHILD CARE DEAL OFFERS FLEXIBILITY AND CHOICE FOR FAMILIES

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO—March 28, 2022—Ontario’s new \$13.2 billion dollar child care agreement with the federal government is good news for families says the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO). “Congratulations to Premier Ford, Minister Lecce and their colleagues for prioritizing flexibility and choice for families, sustainability and stability for the child care sector, and fairness for ECEs working with children in all age groups,” says Andrea Hannen, Executive Director of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO).

“We’re still working our way through the details of the agreement, but we were really pleased to see that Ontario has taken steps to help all families access child care that meets their needs,” says Hannen. “All licensed centres can apply to participate the \$10/day program, including those run as small businesses. This is really key. Without this provision, a lot of families would have been excluded. The Province will also be continuing on with the CARE tax credit, which is important for families who use other forms of child care.”

“Looking ahead, not only did Ontario manage to secure nearly \$3 billion in addition funding for child care, it isn’t limiting its child care expansion plans to any particular segment of the industry. This is important for two reasons: one is that Ontario will be better positioned than some of the other provinces to keep pace with the increased demand for child care spaces that is likely to result as licensed care becomes more affordable for more families. The other is that it is less likely to destabilize the sector during the transition period to the new fee structure. We’ve seen examples from some of the other provinces where these have emerged as very real issues. It’s also great that Ontario is choosing to support ECEs who work with older children, not just those who work with children aged five and under. Once again, this is important for the overall stability of the sector.”

There will be challenges ahead as Ontario seeks to implement the new \$10/day plan to be sure. It will take some time for licensed child care centres to apply to participate in the new program and for municipalities and/or the Province to approve those applications. Child care licensees have until September to determine if it makes sense for them to participate in the new program. It could also take some time to process the paperwork involved in issuing families any retroactive fee rebates to which they may be entitled. Most significantly, the Province will need to work with child care licensees and other stakeholders to develop and implement a plan to find enough qualified staff to keep expanding access to licensed child care. “A lot of centres are struggling with staff shortages just now and it is likely to take some time to sort that out,” says Hannen. “Today’s announcement included some additional resources to address this issue, which is also a very positive step.”

-30-

ADCO is the industry association for Ontario’s independent licensed child care centres, both commercial and not-for-profit. 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: the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO) at admin@adco-o.on.ca or 1-800-567-7075.