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GOVERNMENT WAS WARNED OF PROBLEMS WITH NATIONAL CHILD CARE PLAN BACK IN 2021

For Immediate Release

October 21, 2024-- The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO) is calling for calm as nationwide protests loom against the problem-plagued roll-out of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care program (CWELCC). On October 1, it issued a joint statement with the Canadian Council of Montessori Administrators (CCMA) and the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools (OFIS) discouraging service disruptions for families, but recognizing the concerns many child care centres—both commercial and not-for-profit—have about the program. The joint statement notes: “Its implementation has resulted in a system that excludes the majority of families with children in the age group it is designed to serve, that artificially limits the country’s supply of licensed child care and that suppresses compensation levels for qualified educators.”

“All of the problems we’re seeing now were entirely predictable,” says Andrea Hannen, Executive Director of ADCO. In a [presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in May of 2021](#), [11.05.36 on the counter] ADCO cautioned that “Taking a national, one-size-fits-all approach is risky. It could close thousands of woman-owned small businesses, destabilize existing provincial child care systems and cause chaos for families. This would leave taxpayers having to pay not just to create any new licensed spaces that may be needed, but also to replace all of the spaces that are lost.”

The current Government’s response to these problems was also entirely predictable, says Hannen. “In recent months, we’ve seen the messaging from the federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Jenna Sudds, focus more on the goals of system transformation and the creation of a public system of child care, than on access or sustainability.” The bulk of Canada’s existing child care infrastructure of centres and spaces rests with private operators—both commercial and not-for-profit. To be a fully public system would require using taxpayer money to replace what already exists in the private sector with new taxpayer-financed facilities. Taxpayer funding would then be required to maintain these facilities and fund the services. “Even if this were financially viable, the process would take decades,” says Hannen. “In the meantime, centres are closing, waitlists are growing and working families are being left behind with no child care options.”

In a [recent brief presented to the Federal Secretariat on Early Learning and Child Care](#), ADCO noted: “Given the uniqueness of both children and families and the key role parental choice plays in quality, a really great child care “system” in Canada likely can’t ever exist if it is envisioned primarily as a government program. A more accurate way to describe success is a national ecosystem that makes it easy for families to thrive.”

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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 Andrea Hannen at 1-877-685-4288, ext. 1.