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January 16, 2026

BY E-MAIL

The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Jobs and Families
House of Commons
patty.hajdu@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Hajdu:

On behalf of 800,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), including 12,000 child care workers, we are writing to raise our concerns about the future of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program.

CUPE commends the steps your government took to build a national child care system. The Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care plan is the most significant federal financial and policy commitment to accessible high-quality child care to date. With funding from your government, many provinces and territories have made tremendous progress on bringing down fees and improving wages for child care workers.

Candace Rennick, our National Secretary-Treasurer, was grateful to meet with you and Minister Gainey alongside CUPE child care workers in September of last year. As was articulated then, steps need to be taken to expand this essential program. CUPE advocates for significant additional public investment in order to recruit and retain the workforce needed to ensure that families are not left without licensed care and urges your government to maintain restrictions on for-profit expansion in bilateral agreements with provinces and territories. As your government concurred in Budget 2021 and through the *Canada Early Learning and Child Care Act*, prioritizing public and not for profit provision in child care is critical for maintaining quality.

CUPE was disappointed to see status quo funding allocations in Budget 2025. The level of investment falls far short of what's needed to expand access. We are also concerned that agreements with Ontario and Alberta are short-term and that the initial target of average fees of \$10 a day has been delayed and possibly abandoned in those provinces. Indications that Saskatchewan's agreement allows for public funds to go towards private operators' profits are also deeply troubling.

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MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CANDACE RENNICK

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

DAWN BELLEROSE, PATRICK GLOUTNEY, SHERRY HILLIER, GINA MCKAY, KAREN RANALLETTA

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

Ahead of upcoming ministerial meetings, we ask that you re-commit to the principles set out in the *Canada Early Learning and Child Care Act*, particularly Articles 7 (1)(a) and (d), which affirm support for services provided by public and not for profit child care providers and recognition that a well-supported workforce is essential for improving access and fostering children's social and cognitive development. CUPE also urges your government to invest an additional \$10 billion over the next five years in order to recruit and retain child care workers through provincial transfers earmarked for improving wages, pensions, and benefits. Finally, we call on your government to make significant improvements to the Early Learning and Child Care Infrastructure Fund and to fully fund and support implementation of the Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Frameworks.

CUPE appreciates your early leadership in developing a national early learning and child care system. We remain ready and willing to work with your government to ensure the program lives up to its original objectives.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MH' followed by a stylized flourish.

MARK HANCOCK
National President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Candace Rennick' in a cursive script.

CANDACE RENNICK
National Secretary-Treasurer