July 29, 2024   **BY E-MAIL**

The Honourable Jenna Sudds
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
jenna.sudds@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Sudds:

We write this letter in response to the request brought forward by the Ontario Education Minister Todd Smith to lift the 30% cap on for-profit expansion on child care services.

We stand in strong opposition to any expansion of for-profit child care spaces and urge the federal government to reject the request and all requests that might alter the goal of providing affordable, accessible, quality, inclusive and culturally safe public and non-profit childcare, as outlined in the spirit of the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care program.

As part of your mandate letter, your immediate priority is to:

> build a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system that reduces parent fees, creates more high-quality spaces, recruits and retains skilled educators and ensures all kids get off to the best possible start.

All evidence clearly demonstrates that achieving these objectives is only possible through the expansion of public and non-profit child care services. Moreover, allowing the proportion of for-profit spaces to reach 30% is already far too high, and a glaring anomaly to the way programs are being offered across the country.

Research has repeatedly shown the negative impacts of the privatization of public services, and child care services are no exception. The Lullaboo Nursery and Childcare Centre Inc. takeover of a non-profit centre in Toronto in 2023 offers a shattering example of the impact of for-profit providers on the quality of child care services and on the working conditions.

For-profit operators sacrifice wages and working conditions for increased profit, accentuating the existing challenges in recruitment and retention of qualified personnel.

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National President/Président national
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National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorière nationale

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To overcome the personnel crisis, for-profit providers seek to increase group sizes and reduce ratio of qualified educators in child care spaces, hindering the quality of care.

Public money must be used to fund quality, accessible care offered by professionals, and not to increase revenue for investors. Profit has no place in our children's education.

Solutions for increased child care spaces have to prioritize the expansion of public and non-profit child care services. This expansion must include a workforce strategy aimed at increasing the recruitment and retention of qualified workers. This strategy must recognize the value of the professions in the child care sector, increase wages, and provide comprehensive benefits, including a pension plan.

We urge the federal government to reject the request to lift the 30% cap on for-profit expansion of child care in Ontario and to continue to support the expansion of public and non-profit child care services across the country. When renegotiating the agreement with Ontario for funding, we ask that it includes provisions that require a staged end for public funding to for profit child care in this region, bringing it in line with the vast majority of care being funded across the country. We furthermore urge the federal government to publicly and forcefully recommit to supporting the delivery of public and non-profit child care, both as a matter of principle and as a practical question in pursuit of the best possible care for all Canadian children and families.

We would like to thank you, Minister Sudds, for your attention on this important matter.

Yours truly,

MARK HANCOCK
National President

CANDACE RENNICK
National Secretary-Treasurer

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cc: D. Hauch; A. Iwanchuk; K. Rainville; M. Ferreri, Conservative Critic, Families, Children and Social Development;
     L. Gazan, NDP Critic, Families, Children and Social Development, S. Bérubé, BQ Critic, Families, Children and Social Development