

Press release: Two new reports show overwhelming opposition to Ford government's proposed child care regulations

November 12, 2020

Today, Councillor Layton (Ward 11, University-Rosedale), Councillor Cressy (Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York) and Councillor Carroll (Ward 17, Don Valley North, were joined by child care supporters to share a new report from the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) which found that a vast majority of ECEs and parents surveyed are opposed to proposed child care regulations that would place some younger children into larger groups, with fewer qualified staff.

Some highlights of the report include:

- Over 85% of respondents are opposed changes to Infant/Toddler and Preschool staff to child ratios and group sizes;
- The vast majority of respondents were concerned that the proposed regulation changes would negatively impact the quality of child care and children's safety and well-being.

The changes to child care proposed by the Province of Ontario include:

- Mixing infants and toddlers into one group;
- Lowering the age that a child care may be placed in a Preschool group to 24-months of age;
- Loosening qualification requirements for staff working in licensed child care.

The report is being released prior to the City of Toronto's Economic and Community Development Committee's discussion of a staff report that also points to major concerns with the Ontario government's child care regulation proposals. The report from Children's Services states:

"the City has heard serious concerns with some of the proposed changes...the proposed changes to age ranges, group sizes, staff to child ratios, and qualifications could risk the quality, health, and safety of child care, and place undue pressure on an already strained early years workforce."

These proposed amendments are not in the best interest of children, families, educators, and the future of the sector. They compromise the safety and well-being of children and educators, and fail to acknowledge the important work of child care settings.

For more information, the AECEO and OCBCC survey report can be found here:

: https://www.childcareontario.org/regulation_survey

City of Toronto staff report:

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/ec/bgrd/backgroundfile-157903.pdf>

Quotes:

“These changes are reckless. The Ford government must not push through deregulation that the child care community - educators and parents - clearly do not want.”

- Carolyn Ferns, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

“The proposed regulation changes are an insult to Early Childhood Educators who are working tirelessly to keep child care centres open and prioritize children’s care, education and safety during the pandemic.”

- Alana Powell, Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario.

“Parents, ECEs, and the City of Toronto are all aligned in opposition to these changes and share huge concerns about quality of care and safety. It is sneaky to try to make these changes during a pandemic, when parents are already stressed out and may not be aware of these changes.”

- Councillor Mike Layton (University-Rosedale)

“The economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic depends on parents having access to safe and affordable child care. This is especially true for women who are more likely to be excluded from the workforce without access to child care. Instead of undermining the quality and safety of child care, the Province of Ontario should be investing in new affordable child care spaces so all parents can return to work,”

- Councillor Joe Cressy (Spadina-Fort York)

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