



Written Submission to:

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities regarding *Bill C 35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada.*

From: Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario, submitted March 17 2023

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) is the professional association for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in Ontario. We support ECEs in their professional practice and support the recognition and appropriate compensation of the profession. Our members work throughout Ontario in programs for young children and their families, including regulated home and centre-based child care, full-day kindergarten, family resource programs and support services for children with disabilities, among others.

The AECEO has long called for a publicly funded, high quality, universal child care system in Ontario, and across Canada – one that is affordable for all families and that ensures professional pay and decent work for the early childhood workforce. We welcomed the federal government's commitment in Budget 2021 to build a Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care system, and strongly support a legislative framework that ensures publicly funded, high quality and accessible child care is available to all Canadians for many years to come.

Since 1950, the AECEO has worked to build the collective voice for educators across the province, so they can participate in and influence positive change that benefits ECEs, children, families, and communities. Early Childhood Educators, early years staff and child care providers are the heart of our child care system and are experts at cultivating, co-creating, and advocating for high quality child care programs for young children and families. However, the work of ECEs, a highly racialized and feminized workforce, has historically not been respected, valued or well-remunerated through legislation or child care policy decisions across Canadian jurisdictions. This has resulted in a widespread workforce crisis, in which qualified and experienced ECEs and child care workers are leaving the sector, and graduates of ECE post-secondary programs are not entering the profession due to poor pay and lack of decent working conditions. We call on the federal government to enshrine their support for ECEs and



their commitment to decent working conditions for all ECEs and child care staff in Bill C-35 and in ensuing policies .

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario supports and echoes Child Care Now's proposed amendments to Bill C-35, listed below.

Proposed amendments Bill C-35

Proposed deletions shown as crossed out text; proposed additional language shown in red.

1. Amendments to Section 7(1)

Funding

Guiding principles

7 (1) Federal investments respecting the establishment and maintenance of a Canada-wide early learning and child care system — as well as the efforts to enter into related agreements with the provinces and Indigenous peoples' **organizations** — must be guided by the principles by which early learning and child care programs and services should be accessible, affordable, inclusive and of high quality and must, therefore, aim to

(a) **increase the provision of, and facilitate equitable access to, high quality licensed** early learning and child care programs and services — in particular public and not for profit early learning and child care programs and services ~~child care providers~~ — that meet standards set by provincial governments or Indigenous governing bodies, **and that meet other evidence-based best practices in high quality service provision, and that** respond to the varying needs of children and families;

(b) enable families of **all** incomes, **including low incomes**, to benefit from affordable **licensed** early learning and child care programs and services;

(c) support the provision of **licensed** early learning and child care programs and services, **including in rural and remote communities**, that are **inclusive to children from systematically marginalized groups including Indigenous, Black, racialized and migrant children, children with disabilities and children in different regions and territories, and**



support the provision of programs and services that respect, ~~and~~ value the diversity of all children and families and respond to their varying needs; and

(d) support the provision of high-quality **licensed** early learning and child care programs and services that foster the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of young children, including through the **funding** of a qualified ~~and well-supported~~ **early**

childhood education workforce that is well supported by policies ensuring decent working conditions, proper compensation commensurate with qualifications, experience and ongoing training, and other measures necessary for recruitment and retention of staff.

About the AECEO

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario is the professional association for registered early childhood educators (RECEs) in Ontario. We advocate for respect, recognition and appropriate wages and working conditions for all RECEs and a high quality, publicly funded early childhood education and child care system.