



## **Universal Child Care IS Possible Quick Facts**

### **Ontario's child care landscape as we approach the June 2018 provincial election**

- Research shows that high quality early childhood education and child care provides a foundation on which later learning is constructed, and consistency in high-quality early learning experiences as children grow up supports continuous developmental achievements.<sup>1</sup>
- Children have a right to quality early childhood education and child care programs where they have the opportunity to play and learn. This right is enshrined into the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child to which Canada and the provinces are signatories.<sup>2</sup>
- Ontario has the highest child care fees in Canada and long waiting lists for affordable child care. Child centre care fees in Ontario can be as expensive as rent or mortgages! For infants, the median fee is \$62 but can be as high as \$97 per day. For pre-schoolers (2.5 – 4 years) daily fees are as high as \$72.<sup>3</sup>
- Only about 3 out of 10 children (29.1%) 0 – 4 years have access to a licensed child care space in Ontario.<sup>4</sup> Even though the number of licensed child care spaces for 0 – 4 year olds has increased to 161,086 in 2016-17 from 141,456 in 2010-11. <sup>5</sup>
- More than 2 out of 3 (69.4%) of mothers in Ontario whose youngest child is under 3 years are in the workforce. The percentage jumps to 76 (76.6%) for those whose youngest child is less than 5 years.<sup>6</sup>
- Early childhood educators and child care staff – the core of high quality child care services - are significantly underpaid. As of 2017, 16% of registered early childhood educators (RECEs) working in child care earned less than \$15 per hour. About 45% of RECEs earned \$15 – \$20 per hour.<sup>7</sup>
- Lack of access to high quality, affordable child care is widely acknowledged as the key barrier to women finding and keeping decent work. Even the Ontario government's own Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee made child care its top recommendation for action.
- Other provinces have made progress toward universally accessible high-quality child care for all families who want to use it. Québec's base rate of \$8.05 per day and Manitoba's cap of \$18.80 for pre-schoolers demonstrate that public policy and public funding can achieve affordable child care while ensuring decent wages for child care workers. Ontario's Five-Year Action Plan (2017) must lead to universally accessible, affordable child care for all.

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<sup>1</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). Accessed at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/19401/transforming-the-workforce-for-children-birth-through-age-8-a>

<sup>2</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). Accessed at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education. *2017 Licensed Child Care Survey Report*. Accessed at [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/2017LicensedChildCareOperatorsReport.html#\\_ftn8](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/2017LicensedChildCareOperatorsReport.html#_ftn8). Table 5.

<sup>4</sup> Friendly, M., Larsen, E., Feltham, L., Forer, B., Jones, M. & Grady, B. (in press). *Early childhood education and care in Canada 2016*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education. *Early Years and Child Care Annual Report 2017*. Accessed at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/EarlyYearsChildCareAnnualReport.pdf>. Figures derived from Table 2.

<sup>6</sup> Friendly, M., Larsen, E., Feltham, L., Forer, B., Jones, M. & Grady, B. (in press). *Early childhood education and care in Canada 2016*. Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education. *2017 Licensed Child Care Survey Report*. Accessed at [http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/2017LicensedChildCareOperatorsReport.html#\\_ftn8](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/2017LicensedChildCareOperatorsReport.html#_ftn8). Table 7.