

CHILD CARE AND THE GENDER WAGE GAP

IN A NUTSHELL

Child care is an economic justice issue for women.

- The lack of affordable child care limits mothers' opportunities to participate in on-going, full-time work;
- The current patchwork child care market is a firmly entrenched 'female job ghetto' in which the predominately female workforce continues to be underpaid and undervalued.

THE CHILD CARE CRISIS

- Over the years, limited public funding has resulted in scarce services, unaffordable fees, low wages for educators, and inequitable access for families.
- Underfunding results in constant pressure to keep wages low, as staff wages are *directly tied* to parent fees. Mothers and ECEs bear the burden of government's underinvestment through unaffordable parent fees and low wages.
- The child care crisis is experienced more acutely by families of children with disabilities; single parents; families living in Northern, rural and Indigenous communities; families working non-standard hours, part-time or precarious jobs.

THE OPPORTUNITY

A publicly funded, universal child care system is a necessary component in closing the gender wage gap in two key ways:

For moms: A universal, low-fee child care system would support mothers' economic security by allowing them to return to work, and making their careers less discontinuous, improving their wages over the course of their working life.

For educators: A publicly funded system that supports decent work in the child care sector would reduce turnover and help women build lasting careers in the field.

WHAT WE NEED

The solution to Canada's child care crisis is a publicly funded early learning and child care system that delivers on three big ideas:

1. low fees or no fees for families;
2. decent work and pay for educators;
3. expansion of public and non-profit services.

We need the federal and provincial/territorial governments to provide a strong policy framework, sustained funding for capital expansion and direct funding for child care centres' operation.

The ECEC needs of Indigenous communities must be addressed through a distinct policy framework, developed by both levels of government and representatives of Canada's Indigenous Peoples. It must be provided equal funding.

BY THE NUMBERS

- **\$1,000+** child care fees/ month, some of the highest among 35 OECD countries.
- **16%** of ECEs make less than \$15/hour. Another 45% make less than \$20/hr. 57% of other program staff make less than \$15/hr.
- **44%** of families live in "day care deserts" where there are three children for every one child care space.
- **70%** of child care centres in Canadian cities have waiting lists.
- **32%** of the average single parent's income goes to child care.
- **#1:** Child care was the Ontario's Gender Wage Gap Strategy Committee's first recommendation for government action.