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FEDERAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM MAY LIMIT ACCESS TO CARE AND DECREASE CHOICE FOR PARENTS

For Immediate Release

ONTARIO—May 17, 2021— The federal government, in its 2021 budget, proposed to create and fund a national child care program. While increasing access to child care is a laudable goal, the design of the program could have a devastating impact on parents, their children, child care centres and their employees.

The Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario (ADCO) has always been in favour of measures that provide parents increased access to child care while respecting their choice as to what type of arrangement they wish to make for their children.

Statements surrounding the release of the budget and previous Liberal government efforts to introduce child care programs have tended to favour publicly operated and funded institutions versus smaller private and not-for-profit child care centres. “A program that would discriminate against commercial licensed child care centres would result in uncertainty, limited access to child care and ultimately the loss of jobs and the closure of many woman-owned small businesses,” said Andrea Hannen, ADCO’s Executive Director.

Supporting all child care centres, regardless of their corporate structure and ownership, is important as:

- There is no “one-size fits all” approach to child care – some parents have different needs and preferences and a thriving community of centres run as small businesses enables parents to find the flexibility that they require for their family,
- Independent licensed child care centres run as small businesses or standalone not-for-profits often operate in areas where publicly funded institutional providers have not been viable,
- A new child care program focused on public sector or taxpayer-dependent institutions would create uncertainty and result in the closure of centres throughout Canada – centres often owned and operated by women
- Many licensed child care centres have vacancies because of the societal changes brought on by the pandemic—helping families access these spaces allows them to get their lives back on track right away, rather than having to wait for large, new public sector infrastructure projects to be approved and built.

As a result, ADCO is recommending that the government “trust parents” and empowers families and, as a result, invest its funds directly with parents through measures such as the Canada Child Benefit Program.

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ADCO is the industry association for Ontario’s independent licensed child care centres. Independent licensed child care centres are those that are not run by public sector entities such as municipalities or school boards, or by large multi-service agencies such as YMCAs. While independent licensed child care centres may be run as businesses, not-for-profits or co-ops, their core business is licensed child care. Independent licensed child care centres account for more than a third of Ontario’s licensed child care spaces. Many are small businesses, owned and operated by women.

For further information, please contact:
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