

**THE WOMEN'S COMMITTEE AND THE EXECUTIVE BOARD REPORT
TO THE
TORONTO & YORK REGION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2016**

“THOSE WHO CARE FOR OUR CHILDREN”

It was hardly a surprise when the top recommendation in the Ontario government's Final Report and Recommendations of the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee stated that “the government should immediately commit to developing an early child care system within a defined time frame.” Childcare has long been identified by the feminist and labour movement as a key barrier for many women who, for the most part, are still the ones juggling work and home life. To see the difference that a universal child care strategy could make one only has to look at the province of Quebec which has a seven dollar per day program and as a result has a significantly larger number of working mothers when compared to other provinces. Looking at this report it is clear that the time for all levels of Canadian government to come together and commit to a universal childcare strategy. The time has not only come but is in fact long overdue.

While the Final Report and Recommendations of the Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee starts by identifying the need for child care, it also reflects a reality faced by those who work in that sector. Recommendation 8 in the Report states that “the government should consult with relevant workplace parties on how to value work in female-dominant sectors” which are still underpaid especially in comparison to similar work being done by men.

Despite the fact that a number of child care workers and early childhood educators are dedicated professionals who have obtained a degree or diploma along with membership in a regulatory body, their work is still undervalued and underpaid because of the sexist stigma that surrounds jobs deemed by society to be women's work. Child care is a critical public service in scarce supply yet without the dedication and devotion of the workers who deliver that service we will never achieve the kind of universal, affordable, high quality, public and nonprofit model of childhood education and care working families need and deserve.

First recognized sixteen years ago, the Annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Day exists to celebrate the education, skills, commitment and dedication of those in the early childhood education and child care field and the contributions that they make in the lives of children, families and communities as a whole. It also provides an opportunity to draw attention to the more unpleasant reality of the childcare system. One where too many workers struggle to make ends meet and families unable to find proper child care end up relying on a patchwork system of care.

The Women's Committee and the Executive Board recommends that Labour Council:

- 1) Endorse and recognize Annual Child Care Worker & Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day which takes place in the month of October.
- 2) Commits to advocating for a model of early childhood education and care that is universal, affordable, high quality, public and non-profit.
- 3) Lobby all levels of government and support the work of child care activist and advocacy groups such as the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario and Toronto Coalition.

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