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November 12, 2021

The Honourable Karina Gould, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Gould and Minister Freeland:

Congratulations to you both on your recent appointments as Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, and Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister. We look forward to working with you both to support our shared commitment to strengthening early years and child care for Ontario families.

Ontario is home to approximately 38% of the country's child care aged children and our child care system is large and complex. Families are supported by having the choice of a range of licensed child care options, including child care in homes, schools, child care centres and a range of other venues. Quality and safety in child care programs is a priority for Ontario that is supported by a strong quality, licensing and enforcement regime that applies to all licensed operators. Ontario is also working to expand access to child care by investing over \$1 billion over five years to create 30,000 new child care spaces.

As you are aware, Ontario was a leader in establishing full day junior and senior kindergarten, and in ensuring that child care centres and before and after programming was available to all four and five year-olds. We consider these spaces to be integral components of both our child care and education systems. The creation of universal programming for these children at no charge to families is an important investment of \$3.6 billion annually.

While Ontario has made considerable gains to improve early learning and child care, we believe there is an opportunity to continue to build a child care system that Ontario's families, children and businesses can rely on. We welcome the federal government's offer to partner in the costs of expanding affordable access to child care for more Ontario families. Ontario shares many of the goals of the proposed Canada-Wide Child Care System, as we see these goals translating to real impacts for our population.

With this in mind, we are writing to express our interest to continue discussions with the Government of Canada on the Canada-Ontario Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

As negotiations resume, we would like to share Ontario's principles for negotiation and critical elements of any deal for Ontario:

1. Sustainability – assurance that a social policy expansion of this magnitude can be sustained over the long-term to provide certainty for Ontario families and the province of Ontario. Ontario families need to plan for the future and expect their government to do the same, and not be confined to time-limited agreements and funding.
2. Flexibility – recognition of the size and complexity of Ontario's child care system and the flexibility required on terms, targets and funding to recognize Ontario's jurisdiction in managing its child care system, and to allow us to implement responsibly.
3. Support for all families – enabling Ontario to support a range of different child care models so that all Ontarians can benefit from these reforms.

Ontarians expect governments to work together to arrive at solutions to the problems of our time. With the right investment, with flexibility and with a long-term commitment, we are hopeful that Canada can partner with Ontario to deliver real results for children, for families and for our economy.

As follow-up to this letter, officials from Ontario will reach out to federal officials to continue discussions. Our government looks forward to working with your government to support our shared commitment to strengthening early years and child care for Ontario families.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Stephen Lecce, MPP
Minister of Education



The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP
Minister of Finance

- c: Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education
Greg Orencsak, Deputy Minister of Finance
Lynn Betzner, Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Holly Moran, Assistant Deputy Minister of Early Years and Child Care, Ministry of Education
Phil Graham, Assistant Deputy Minister of Strategic Policy and Planning, Ministry of Education
Elizabeth Doherty, Assistant Deputy Minister Office of the Budget
Zoë Kroeker, Assistant Deputy Minister, Intergovernmental Affairs