

Municipality of *Bluewater*

October 2, 2023

The Honourable Lisa M. Thompson
Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP)
408 Queen Street, P.O. Box 426
Blyth, ON N0M 1H0

Re: Childcare availability in Ontario

Dear Minister Thompson:

The Municipality of Bluewater is concerned about the critical issue of childcare availability in our province and how it is linked to educational requirements and low wages within the childcare sector. We believe that addressing these issues is crucial for the well-being of our families and the future prosperity of Bluewater and Ontario.

Childcare availability in Ontario has become an increasingly pressing problem for parents and guardians. Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is essential for families to balance work and family responsibilities, and it plays a vital role in supporting the early development and education of our children. However, the lack of available childcare spaces is a significant barrier for many parents, limiting their ability to participate fully in the workforce and achieve financial stability.

We suspect that one of the key factors contributing to the shortage of childcare spaces is the educational requirements imposed on childcare workers. While it is important to ensure the safety and well-being of children in childcare settings, the current educational requirements may be overly restrictive. These requirements often result in a shortage of qualified childcare providers, making it challenging to expand the availability of childcare services.

This year in the Municipality of Bluewater, we have childcare facilities and before and after school programs that have closed or have reduced capacity due to lack of qualified staffing. These recent closures and capacity issues have imposed a significant amount of stress on families in our community.

Additionally, low wages within the childcare sector are a significant concern. Many qualified and passionate individuals are discouraged from pursuing a career in childcare

due to the low wages and limited opportunities for professional growth. This low-wage structure not only makes it difficult to attract and retain skilled childcare educators but also effects the quality of care children receive. Investing in the professional development and fair compensation of early childcare educators is essential to ensure that our children receive the best care possible and the best start in life.

To address these issues and improve childcare availability in Ontario, the Municipality urges you to consider the following actions:

1. Review and Reform Educational Requirements: Work with relevant stakeholders to review and potentially revise the training methods of early childcare educators, striking a balance between safety and accessibility by increasing the praxis model to learning.
2. Invest in Professional Development: Advocate for increased investment in professional development opportunities for childcare workers to enhance their skills and qualifications.
3. Increase Wages: Support initiatives to increase the wages of childcare workers, ensuring that they are paid a fair and competitive salary for the vital work they do.
4. Expand Funding: Work to secure additional funding for the expansion of childcare services and facilities, especially in underserved and rural communities.
5. Promote Public Awareness: Raise public awareness about the importance of accessible and high-quality childcare services and the need for policy changes.

This is an urgent matter that is expected to worsen and your timely response to these concerns is needed.

By addressing these issues, we can make significant strides toward improving childcare availability in Bluewater and Ontario and ensuring that families have the support they need to thrive. We kindly request your timely support and advocacy on these matters and would be grateful for any updates or initiatives related to childcare reform in our province.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to your continued dedication to the well-being of Ontario's families and children.

Sincerely,



Mayor Paul Klopp for the
Council of the Municipality of Bluewater

cc: Premier Doug Ford
Ben Lobb, Huron-Bruce MP
Hon. Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
All Ontario Municipalities