

POSITION PAPER ON DAY CARE
TO THE O.F.L. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

JUNE 16, 1972

Of all the social services so callously neglected by the provincial government, none is as pressing as the need for more day care centres. The need and the demand are so legitimate in economic terms alone.

In 1971 there were 1,110,000 women in the Ontario work force, which is 34 percent of the total labour force. (Statistics Canada Monthly Labour Force Survey). Of this number 652,000 or 62 percent were married with 300,000 having children under 13 years of age.

There are over 97,000 children under the age of five with physical facilities in Ontario capable of accommodating 28,000 children.

These statistics tell an important story. They describe a social problem of profound magnitude. They mean thousands of working mothers face the difficult emotional decision of where and how their children will be cared for while they work. They mean that thousands of women are penalized by the lack of day care facilities. Not only the mothers are burdened unfairly but thousands of children.

It is clear that the demand for day nurseries is justified both in the lowest economic terms, and in the most compelling human terms.

The major block to the establishment of new day care programs to meet the ever-growing demand for services is the

lack of capital funds. New ways must be found to make capital funds available to both municipalities and to non-profit private agencies to enable them to initiate and expand services.

The operating costs of day care is shared by all three levels of government: 50% federal, 30% provincial, and 20% by the municipality or region. Bill 110, an Act to amend the Day Nurseries Act, does not permit the granting of the 80% cost sharing to any group other than a municipality.

The net result of the government's lack of concern has left mothers with a choice of expensive private facilities if they can find them, or the risk of leaving their children with irresponsible and often unreliable neighbours.

We recommend to the government of Ontario:

1. They provide a network of day care centres throughout the province in much the same way as hospitals and schools are regarded as essential social requirements.
2. They amend Bill 110 to provide non-profit private industrial day care centres with the same 80 percent cost sharing arrangement now granted only municipalities.
3. They promote the establishing of day care centres at places of work. In new plants every effort should be made to have facilities planned and built in.
4. They establish a program to provide more training facilities for day care supervisory staff.
5. They encourage the saving of capital expenditure by the more imaginative use of existing buildings, such as empty classrooms, churches, apartment space and other neighbourhood facilities.
6. They abolish the means test and make day care available to all working mothers regardless of means.

Prepared by the Social Services Department.

