

Press Release

**Parents get lip service in Ontario daycare consultation—
Ontario summertime daycare consultation excludes parents**

June 28, 2012 – Smithville – Kids First Parent Association of Canada, a national charity supporting children's optimal care and well-being, states that Ontario's Minister of Education is seeking to minimize parents' participation in a consultation on child care announced Wednesday.

The group is asking government to extend the September 24 deadline to December. It is also asking for the consultation to include equitable direct funding to families to enable parents to choose child care and early learning that works best for them, rather than restricting discussion and funding to non-parental settings.

Helen Ward, President of Kids First, states, "As happened in BC, Ontario is holding a summertime consultation about young children and announcing it just as holidays begin. Clearly this is timed to avoid parents' participation. Parents are the main providers of children's care and early learning and must control these decisions to best meet children's needs. Government funding must be neutral. But the consultation paper explicitly says that this will not be considered. It's like saying: we'll discuss food policy but only consider fast food and exclude farmers, home cooks, and eaters. When will the government stop illegally discriminating against children and parents that do not prefer full time institutional care?"

April Arthur, Vice-President of Kids First and a registered daycare provider in Niagara region, adds, "The discussion paper for this so-called consultation says it is 'putting families first'. Parents are sick of this lip service. The goal stated in the paper is: put more daycares in schools and close other options. Parental care and home daycare are not even considered. In contrast to the junk science self-published by the daycare and all-day kindergarten lobby, the peer-reviewed evidence shows that institutional settings are the most expensive, least popular, and most harmful. Why does our government think parents should not care for their kids or even freely choose who does?"

Kids First is urging parents to tell the government to stop daycare discrimination and put families first by adopting a neutral position on child care and funding families instead.

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