

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN



FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES FEMMES DIPLÔMÉES DES UNIVERSITÉS

March 5, 2007

The Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers
Minister of Children & Youth Services
56 Wellesly St. W. 14th Floor
Toronto, ON
M5S 2S3

Dear Minister Chambers,

On behalf of the Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women, I would like to comment on the provincial initiative "Best Start" child care program. We commend the McGuinty Government for investing an additional \$9.6 million dollars and creating 15,000 new licensed child care spaces into a program we consider to be a valuable asset to early education in Ontario.

The "Best Start" program not only improves learning opportunities for children when they enter Grade One, but it also encourages parental participation, a critical factor to ensure a child does not drop out of high school. The formative early years create an opportunity for programs such as "Best Start" to identify and intervene in any learning or emotional issues a child may have. The result is a child starting Grade One, ready to meet the challenges of school, thereby having a greater chance of achieving a high level of academic success.

However, despite the additional 15,000 spaces created in 2006, the need for quality early childhood education continues to escalate. All children in both urban and rural communities deserve to have equal access to early childhood education.

We therefore would encourage the McGuinty government to review the funding for "Best Start" from both a child care and educational view. Our recommendation would be to increase funding to ensure "Best Start" is not just sustained at the level it is at now, but continues to meet the future needs of all children in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Linda MacGregor, President
CFUW Ontario Council

Wendy Taylor, Education Chair
CFUW Ontario Council

Cc. Premier Dalton McGuinty
Cc. Hon. Kathleen Wynne