FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Report: $10aDay Child Care Plan Boosts Ontario GDP by $13.6 Billion, Generating Over $2 Billion in Provincial Revenue for the Ford Government

TORONTO (July 27, 2026) — As the Ford and Carney governments continue to negotiate a new child care agreement, [a new report released today] reveals that the expansion of affordable child care services in Ontario has delivered a substantial economic boost to the province, even as the provincial government lags behind national progress in implementing the new national program.

The report, authored by economist Dr. Jim Stanford from the Centre for Future Work, finds that Ontario's GDP in 2024 was $13.6 Billion higher than it would have been without the expansion of child care since 2019.

That growth in GDP generated approximately $2.25 Billion in extra provincial revenue in 2024 alone. This amount slightly exceeded the provincial funding to child care that year, indicating the program effectively pays for itself through increased economic activity.

- Job Creation: Over 17,000 new jobs have been created in Ontario's child care sector since 2019, with total sector compensation expected to exceed $3 Billion in 2026.
- Empowering Women in the Workforce: Core-age (25-54) female labour force participation in Ontario increased by two full percentage points between 2019 and 2026—outpacing the national trend. This shift, combined with more women moving from part-time to full-time work, added 81,500 full-time-equivalent workers to the provincial economy.
- Improved Job Quality: Average weekly earnings for child care workers rose by 39% since 2019, while average weekly hours increased from 26 to 31.

"Affordable, quality child care services are a vital precondition for economic progress," said Stanford. "The data confirm that even Ontario's partial and inconsistent rollout of the national program has been an economic boon. However, the province is leaving billions of dollars in potential growth on the table by failing to meet its targets for new spaces and lower fees".

Despite economic gains, the report highlights significant concerns regarding the Ontario government's commitment to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program. Ontario's current child care agreement is set to expire in March 2027, and Ontario remains 25% behind its target for creating new spaces for children under six. Furthermore, while the national goal is $10aDay, daily CWELCC fees in Ontario currently average $19 with a cap of $22. The report also criticizes the province's heavy reliance on for-profit providers—accounting for 44% of full-day spaces—which research associates with lower quality of care and higher staff turnover.

"Economic gains would have been even larger had the province moved more quickly and consistently to make the most of federal support," said Carolyn Ferns, Policy Coordinator for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. "Ontario parents are still facing long waitlists and fees that remain too high. The provincial government must stop its half-hearted commitment, sign a new five-year agreement with the federal government, and boost its own provincial funding to child care in the next budget."

A critical challenge identified in the report is the ongoing workforce crisis. While real earnings for ELCC staff have grown by 15% since 2019, wages remain significantly lower than in other professions with similar training requirements.

"While the economic figures are impressive, we cannot ignore that this system is built on the hard work of educators who are still waiting for professional pay," said Amber Straker, Executive Director of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario. "To solve the shortage of over 10,000 Registered Early Childhood Educators, the province must implement a pay-equity-compliant, province-wide wage grid. Investing in the workforce is the only way to ensure the quality and sustainability of the child care system that Ontario's economy now relies upon".

The report concludes with urgent recommendations for the Ontario government, including securing long-term funding through 2031, eliminating "child care deserts," and fulfilling the $10aDay affordability promise.

"If Ontario fails to fully commit to a universal system, these historic economic gains will be squandered," added Stanford.

- Full report
- One-page summary

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The report was commissioned by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario from the Centre for Future Work. The Centre for Future Work is a labour economics research institute with offices in Vancouver and Toronto. It conducts progressive research on the economic and social issues facing working people in Canada.

To arrange further comment by **Dr. Jim Stanford, please contact info@centreforfuturework.ca or 647-544-2150**.

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