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YWCA Toronto's Statement on the Canada-Ontario Child Care Deal

Today we join feminists across the country to celebrate the momentous signing of a Canada-Ontario child care deal. This agreement has come after decades of advocacy by the women's movement for a high-quality, accessible and affordable national child care plan. While we are excited, we know the work does not stop here.

Child care is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Access to child care is foundational to women's labour market participation, and universal child care is a key tenet of gender equality. We have always believed that no woman should be forced to choose between a career or having a family. And, that no child care worker should be paid an inadequate wage. Today we are one step closer to achieving that dream.

The pandemic has highlighted what we have always known: Child care educators are essential workers. Child care educators have worked throughout the pandemic, ensuring the economy stayed open and providing compassionate care for our youngest community members. It is critical that their labour is recognized and fairly compensated.

We echo the calls by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and other sector partners that Ontario needs a child care workforce strategy to recruit and retain child care workers. We believe all child care workers deserve fair wages and decent working conditions – and that the \$18 per hour wage floor announced by the government does not go far enough to address the immediate child care staffing crisis.

While there is still much work to do, we look toward the future with greater optimism. We are so proud to have supported child care advocacy efforts over the past few decades – as a YWCA movement, as feminists, as mothers and parents, and as a local child care operator. We remain committed to working with our partners and the government to expand a public and non-profit led child care system.

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