

Media Release

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Early Childhood Educators asked to keep the Pascal Vision Alive

The AECEO is calling on its' members to keep the Pascal vision alive by insisting the Ontario government adopt the full plan for education and child care reform presented by its early learning advisor. This is the best way of benefiting children, families and the early childhood profession, says Eduarda Sousa, Executive Director of the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO).

The Ontario governments fragmented approach in implementing full day learning is seriously jeopardizing its' own strategy, Sousa said. "It's failure to require school boards to operate the program year round. Its absolute silence on how the needs of children under 3 years old, and those 6-12, will be met, is creating unnecessary divisions in the early childhood and education sector."

The AECEO was among the hundreds of advocates who called for the full implementation of the Early Learning Advisors' report when it was released in June 2009. "The writing was on the wall" says Sousa "by choosing to put in place only part of one piece of the report -- full day learning for four and five year olds, operating on school days only -- the strategy has now encountered many challenges. Vagueness in the language in the Bill 242 amendments has only served to further confuse stakeholders and the public."

In response to the poor implementation strategy, calls to retain the status quo have emerged from various quarters. In particular some school boards want child care operators to continue providing extended hour programming. This would effectively dismantle Pascal's approach for a single, seamless, continuum of programming for children from birth to age 12.

The AECEO is calling on its' members to stay the course and support the implementation of a comprehensive early learning system that will finally help create a level playing field for all of Ontario's children. This system would see early childhood educators working under one Ministry, working full time hours, and receiving the recognition and benefits they have long fought for.

"Creating a two tier system would not only be a continuation of the fragmentation that presently exists but would leave the profession divided between those who work for one Ministry and those who struggle under another" says Kelly Massaro-Joblin, President of the AECEO.

Early Childhood Educators have fought for the rights of children from as far back as 1950. This is an opportunity to finally address the inequity in access to early learning and care that exists in this province. Full day early learning must be available to all children.