



105B Walker St., Truro, Nova Scotia, B2N 4B1

Jan. 25, 2022

Anne-Marie Smith

Director of Projects

Canada-Wide Early Learning & Child Care Implementation

(via email - Anne-Marie.Smith@novascotia.ca)

Re: Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare

Dear Anne-Marie Smith,

Thank you for reaching out on Friday afternoon (Jan. 21) to discuss the concerns that have been raised by childcare centers in Colchester County, and other areas of the province, about the pending roll out of the publicly funded centralized system for early learning and childcare.

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to better understand the province's plans moving forward, however, we recognize there are still many details remaining to be worked through by both the province and the operators as the project advances.

As I shared, private childcare operators have invested and incurred debt to establish their business, selected staff that fit their business model, and have forged close relationships with families. The future sustainability of their business and value of these investments remains uncertain for many still attempting to seek legal and financial advice. The three options presented by government earlier this month in their stated form leave some operators feeling helpless even though it is suggested more details are forthcoming.

You noted you believe there is misinformation currently circulating based on initial interpretation of the Canada-wide Early Learning Childcare System plan presented to stakeholders. In conversation with members of the childcare community, we have compiled a list of questions they would like answered to help guide them to a decision. Providing answers to these questions would improve communication that they need answers to weigh their options. I hope you will address these concerns in future communication with the centres. We would be pleased to assist you by organizing any meetings for centres in our local region you would like to connect with.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'Sherry Hartlett'.

Executive Director

Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce



Questions submitted by Childcare Centre operators regarding their informed decision-making process in joining the Canada-Wide Early Learning plan;

Option A

- What are the terms and conditions? When can we expect to see them?
- When joining this new plan, what wages and compensation package will our ECE's be offered? What will we be offered for our administration expertise?
- Will we have input on which employee comes into the centre, HR or PD.
- What happens to our staff? Support staff? Inclusion support? Programming support? Quality comes at a price, extra staff allow for paperwork to be completed, behaviours to be supported, and families to be bonded with. How can this still continue?
- What happens to our families? Our wait lists? Our promises to families?
- Will our building still be owned by us? Will we be able to charge a rent that supports the actual cost?
- Will we be able to have say on the foods, schedule, hours of operation, group sizes, or programming being done in the center? What control will be taken or gained?
- What role will co-directors, directors, owners, assistant directors, program leaders, pedagogical leaders have in this new system? What are the job descriptions? Role expectations? Hours of work? Will centres with two directors be allowed under these new plans? What about buildings and licenses owned by two people?
- What is a purchase fit up? How will older centers be maintained and upkept?
- Any loans, debts, mortgages owing in our names, covid relief funds, taxes, how will they be taken care of?
- What will happen to our benefit plans? Retirement plans? Trust funds? Any stocks these women or men own?

Option B

- 60% the annual QIG; are you saying our building, materials, equipment, assets are only worth approximately \$30,000?
- Is the 60% one-time lump sum payment to pay for the legal and accountant fees to switch over to non-for-profit, or do we use what they have left from the \$15,000 TSG? This isn't enough to pay of our debts.
- When will this new central organization be ready? How long must we wait?
- How will this central organization know how to support the families in our community? The language barriers, the bonds build, the wait list communications, the support for community resources, the family tours, newsletters, the parent meetings and field trips? How will these things continue to still happen?
- What's the negotiable lease? What is a "reasonable rent cost"?
- What happens to all of our staff? What are we to communicate to our staff and families?
- How will we be supported in the transition? Will the centre need to close in the transition?
- Why is there no board of directors? How can this central organization do it all?

Option C



- If we are a licenced Child Care Centre, why can't we offer families subsidy? This is not accessibility for all.
- Will untrained staff and Entry level's still be allowed to work in these settings?
- What's going to be included in the Family and Employees letters they must sign?
- If ECE's join the central organization, will they be considered government employees?

Other Questions we must consider;

- What is this "higher level of financial accountability"?
- Many ECE's are undecided in attending school when they can't be told what their wage will be when they come out. Why have more training? Many students in school right now are not eligible for the bursaries that were promised, why?
- Where is the transparency? Why was there no discussion of the 25% reduction of fees and retroactive pay at the info session we attended on Jan. 13th? Where was the info package when it was promised to operators on or by Dec 31st?
- If we become part of the central organization, will we be informed of and communicated with about which schools will be providing care to 2/3-year-old's? School age BAP programs? And when they will begin?
- Where is the support for the wages for staff already working in childcare? Why are pre-primary wages/pension/benefits being considered separately still from this new wage plan for ECE's? Why are families about to get 25% off fees now but the educators working on the floor, during the pandemic, must wait till the 4th quarter?
- If it is a better option for us to close our Centre and sell our building, how will the government still support these spaces in childcare?
- How is taking 194 business away good for "rebuilding the economy"?
- All options don't allow us to continue to deliver childcare the way we planned, or without putting ourselves in a poor financial position. How can we still have control over our centres in this new central organization, how can we come to an agreement?
- "Licensee costs associated with implementation of this plan will be considered later" What does this mean?
- What advice should we be seeking council in? There have been no numbers provided, no answers about what the government will do with properties, materials, debts, etc. Where is the information?
- What about the family friendly policies we have already created?
- How can we know all of our EOI's, surveys, concerns and questions have been read and taken into consideration?
- There are current flaws in the publicly funded systems already (healthcare, public school) How can we be confident this is the right move for childcare?
- Will private centers be expected to give families 25% retroactive credit from Jan1-April 1? (cheques cost money, bookkeeping costs money)
- "Focus on new spaces to be accessible for vulnerable families, those who require enhances supports, Indigenous & Black children, Newcomers, 2SLGBTQ2+ & other language minorities" What about the spaces that will be lost that already support families like this?