NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO
DAY CARE NEWS

May 1990

DAY CARE NEWS is a forum for the sharing of information between day care groups throughout the region, as well as providing information about what's happening on the federal and provincial scenes, both in terms of governmental policy/legislation and advocacy groups' activities.

We hope that this newsletter will combat some of the isolation that day care workers and advocates feel and that through the sharing of resources, ideas and action plans, we can develop strategies to ensure the growth and strengthening of quality day care in our region.

We welcome submissions to this newsletter from every day care centre and committee throughout Northwestern Ontario. Please send articles, news clippings, letters, etc. to Box 144, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7C 4V5.

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FORUM 1990

Forum 1990, sponsored by the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee, with the financial support of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, convened in Thunder Bay March 2nd and 3rd, 1990. This Regional Day Care Forum brought together over 70 day care parents, workers, administrators and advocates from across Northwestern Ontario.

At the request of the Municipal Centres a workshop on Friday afternoon focused on the impact of the new guidelines for calculating per diem rates;
-identifying local and regional concerns resulting from this directive;
-becoming aware of actions planned by local centres-

municipalities in respect to the concerns; and,
-to consider appropriate regional action.

Guests from the Ministry of Community and Social Services participated in this session. The impact of moving to enrollment based parent fees has a great effect on Northwestern Ontario; many are seasonal workers, or shift workers, as well there is a large labour pool that must move from community to community, especially in the construction trades.
The other item of major concern is raising the cost to full-fee paying parents.

This was a good opportunity for ministry representatives to dialogue with the child care community. One of the major items that came from the session is that there needs to be consistency of information and implementation at the area office level. It is hoped that more opportunities of this kind will occur in the future.

The research document, Child Care Funding: An Equity Challenge was presented Saturday morning. This is the final result of what was known the Weighting Factor Project. The report recognized that the present funding system is flawed and calls for a review of the present funding mechanisms and the implementation of a child care system in Ontario that has political will behind it.

Workshops were offered on Pay Equity, Board Development, and Professional Development.

Throughout the child care community there is agreement that a crisis exists, that the child care system in Ontario is unsatisfactory and must be changed. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has prepared a major Discussion Paper supporting the move to the Ministry of Education, which would help alleviate this crisis. Participants at the conference examined this proposal as it relates to Northwestern Ontario.

FORUM FOLLOW-UP

A number of issues were highlighted requiring immediate or long-term action by the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee. The federal budget was of serious concern and telegrams were sent to Finance Minister Mr. Wilson and Ontario Treasurer Robert Nixon regarding the federal restrictions imposed on the Canada Assistance Plan. A telegram was sent to Prime Minister Mulroney protesting cuts to Women's Programs in the Secretary of State.

Follow-up to the serious issue of pay equity for workers in establishments without male comparators was made through telegrams, letters and participating in the Coalition's meeting with the Minister of Labour.

The C-PET project interested a number of delegates and on-going consultation to receive Northwestern Ontario input and encourage centres to use the final document will continue.

The Forum initiated discussion on the issue of child care

jurisdiction-the education option and comprehensive dialogue on this subject needs to occur in the coming year. The North-western Ontario Regional Day Care Committee will produce a discussion paper comparing the findings of Child Care Funding: An Equity Challenge and the Coalition's Eduction option discussion paper to assist the on-going regional discussion of this topic.

The desire for on-going professional development is still a top priority for those in the field. A list of topics was generated and the informal network will continue to keep people informed. The newsletter will also write about note worthy professional development experiences. There is a strong desire to have much of this available in a more structured way.

A good time was had by all at the networking evening on Friday night and at the dinner on Saturday Evening.

1990/91 Council Members

The annual business meeting and Council elections of the NWORDCC were held in conjunction with the Regional Forum. Your 1990/91 Council members are:

Anita Broere	Thunder Bay
Shelley Brown	Thunder Bay
Lynn Carlson	Dryden
Joanne Dawes	Longlac
Mary Ducharme	Fort Frances
Veronica Kreidl	Marathon
Teresa Legowski	Thunder Bay
Jacinta Manitowabi-Brisard	Thunder Bay
Mary Matys	Terrace Bay
Anita Price	Thunder Bay
Holly Rupert	Red Lake
Corinne Russell	Thunder Bay
Eva Shields	Atikokan
Rob Stinchcombe	Thunder Bay
Maria Swain	Grassy Narrows
Betty Anne West	Fort Frances

The Council meets two or three times a year to discuss items affecting the day care community in Northwestern Ontario. Along with the discussion there is often action taken by the Council.

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$700,000 To Child Care In Northern Ontario

$5000 for each non-profit child care centre in Northern Ontario has been allocated by the Honourable Charles Beer and the Honourable Rene Fontaine. In early February the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the Ministry of Community and Social Services announced that Northern Ontario's 140 non-profit centres would re-ceive $700,000 to help purchase furnishings and developmental equipment.

All we can say is that this is very nice. It will assist many centres. BUT, it is not what the child care community desperately needs. The child-ren in Ontario deserve suff-icient funding in the first place, not a handout when the whim hits someone.

A suggestion regarding pol-itical action on this issue, might be to respond to the Honourable Rene Fontaine, Minister of Northern Devel-opment and Mines thanking his Ministry and pointing out that stable funding for child care

in Ontario would be better than another band-aid. A copy of the thank you letter should be sent to the Honourable Charles Beer, the Minister of Community and Social Services.

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REGIONAL REPORTS

Dryden is fortunate. The town council is very supportive of child care. Plans are being developed for their new building, which will have 48 spaces and hopefully an integrated license. The Nursery School will also be moving into the new building. Future plans include a Private Home Day Care Program operating from the new building and will incorporate the school-age program. It has been difficult to operate the school-age spaces as the school-age children must be kept separate. A need for profession development has been identified.

A few anxious moments were experienced by the child care community in **Fort Frances** this spring. With a little lobbying to the Municipal Councillors by parents in the day care and other community groups the crisis was solved and the tender has been let for the new building.

Per diem rates have once again gone up. In response to this, a letter was sent to the Honourable Charles Beer regarding the new guidelines, and a reply was received stating that the transitional grant will not be removed.

Marathon day care, which is operated by a non-profit parent board requested $8000 from the town council this year, but only received $4000. They will continue to lobby throughout the year to ensure that they will receive more next year.

The Community Needs Assessment survey is complete. The expansion has received 100% funding and will have 69 spaces. Application has been made to increase the subsidized spots from 15 to 20 but an answer has not been received from MCSS.

Congratulations to Kinderplace Child Care in Thunder Bay who held an open house recently. Infants, toddlers, and pre-schoolers will enjoy the bright spacious rooms in this facility.

The Advisory Committee to the **Municipality of Thunder Bay day care** is proposing guidelines regarding full fee paying parents. Rob Stinchcombe reported that Social Services seems not to be opposed to enrollment based day care.

Councillor Dusty Miller, Chairperson of Community Services, The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay, announced on March 22, 1990 that the Comprehensive Child Care Study had commenced. Funding for this project is a joint Provincial-Municipal venture. The Goal of the Study is: to determine the role of the Municipality of Thunder Bay in delivering child care programs in Thunder Bay and surrounding areas, currently, and within the next ten year period.

Jumbo Gardens operates a school age program for children from 8-12 which is located in a separate room from the other children. This seems to be working extremely well.

Immigrant women, several native groups and day care advocates from Manitouwadge and Terrace Bay have contacted Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care regarding establishing day care services.

It is with concern that we learn of the shift in philosophy regarding **Confederation College's Children and Family Centre.** The shift from a community-centred education service to a quasi-commercial operation is deeply disturbing. The College has been considered a leader in the child care community, not only in Northwestern Ontario, but also provincially and nationally. The Centre's philosophy of child care, and the development of comprehensive services, is viewed as a model of excellence. The Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee has written to Jack Stokes, Chairman of the Board of Governors urging the Board of Governors to reverse this decision and ensure that our community will continue to benefit from the leadership and excellence that, in the past, has been provided by the Children and Family Centre.

MEETINGS WITH M.P.P.'S

During March and April Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care representatives met with M.P.P.'s Lyn McLeod, Taras Kozyra, and Frank Michlash. Issues discussed included pay equity, the capping of C.A.P., the new guidelines for municipal centres, and the document Child Care Funding: An Equity Challenge.

QUIZ

The average industrial wage for workers in Ontario in 1984 was $404.07. What was the average child care worker wage then?
(a) $364.68
(b) $314.98
(c) $267.00

What were child care workers' salaries as a percentage of the average industrial wage?
(a) 54%
(b) 66%
(c) 72%

The average industrial wage for workers in Ontario in 1988 was $686.80. What was the average child care worker wage?
(a) $549.00
(b) $324.00
(c) $444.00

What was child care workers' wages as a percentage of the 1988 average industrial wage?
(a) 47%
(b) 66%
(c) 69%

Have child care workers wages risen of fallen in relation to the average industrial wage since 1988?
Risen___
Fallen___

By how much?
(a) 19%
(b) 4%
(c) 22%

PLEASE GIVE THIS QUIZ TO YOUR MPP, TO YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER, TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR AND ANYONE YOU CAN THINK OF!

PROVINCIAL-MUNICIPAL SOCIAL SERVICES REVIEW

The Provincial-Municipal Social Services Review (P.M.S.S.R.) has recently released its long-awaited report. The implementation of the recommendations of this report would have a significant impact on child care in Northwestern Ontario and it is urgent that we study the report and develop a response from the Northwestern Ontario child care perspective.

The government has indicated that they will provide their response in six months. While a consultation process has been mentioned, no details have been provided. We need to be prepared.

We ask you to:

(1) Study the report immediately. (Borrow a copy of the report from your municipal office, or ask your M.P.P. to obtain a copy for you.)
(2) Send us your reactions to the report (positive or negative) as soon as possible.
(3) Please advise us if your Day Care Centre/Board and /or Parent's Group plans to develop a written response to the report.
(4) Keep us informed about the reaction of your Municipal Council to the report (reaction to entire report, not just day care section).
(5) Encourage awareness and discussion of the implications of the report.

While we (Council, staff) have not yet fully analyzed this report, we suspect that certain Northern realities may not have received adequate consideration. Again we will need to make our Northwestern Ontario voice heard.

Your input is very important and we encourage you to respond quickly.

THE DOCUMENT CHILD CARE FUNDING:AN EQUITY CHALLENGE IS AVAILABLE FOR $15 FROM THE NORTHWESTERN ONTARIO REGIONAL DAY CARE OFFICE. THIS DOCUMENT DISCUSSES THE HIGH COST OF THE DELIVERY OF CHILD CARE IN NORTHERN ONTARIO. CALL US AT 345-8803 TO ORDER YOUR COPY. PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER SO THAT WE CAN GET BACK TO YOU.

Trillium Funding:
The Ontario Coalition For Better Child Care is applying for Trillium Funding. Organizations may apply along with them. If you are interested in submitting a proposal, please contact our office at 807-345-8803 and speak to Lee Angus about this. All submissions must be in prior to June 5, so time is short. Please leave a message on the machine, if there is no answer.

THE ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE--CONFERENCE REPORT
By Anita Price

The Coalition Conference was held April 28th and 29th in Guelph, usually just a 45 minute drive from the Toronto International Airport.

Barbara Elliott and I went to the conference to do a workshop and to participate in the many interesting activities. We left the Airport shortly after 6:00. We took a "Red Car" from there to go to Guelph.

The weather in the Toronto area was unseasonably hot! The 401 in a spot buckled due to the extremes in weather conditions. We spent approximately 3 hours in bumper to bumper traffic most of the journey to Guelph.

Once we got to the University Campus, we found our way to the residence and to our room. The weather was just beautiful. We went for a stroll around the campus without a jacket.

The nest morning we went for breakfast in the cafeteria before the Council Meeting. At the meeting, many items were discussed. The biggest discussion was a result of the educational-option discussion paper and future action.

The Trillium funding and the new membership category was discussed. The Coalition is looking at offering more services to "network" members, therefore they would pay a higher registration fee to access these services.

The Council Meeting was quite a long meeting 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., with many members observing.

Once the Council Meeting was over, we went over to meet the Minister of Community and Social Services, Charles Beer. He talked about what has happened in child care and what the restrictions are for the Provincial Government due to the cap on C.A.P. We were anticipating that something good in child care would be announced by the Minister at our Conference, but that was not the case.

After the session with the Minister, there were a variety of workshops for people to attend. Barbara Elliott and I presented a workshop on Multi-aged groupings, a concept we are promoting and modelling in our new Centre.

Once the workshops were over, we had a bit of time to chat with others from across the province as well as people from British columbia and New Brunswick.

The next day was as busy and exciting as the first. it started off for me with an Executive Meeting. Then the whole group participated in a session called "The Bear Pit". Margaret Phillips was a panellist from Northwestern Ontario. People spoke of their frustration around day care issues.

Workshops were attended after the Bear Pit session.

Marion Dewar was the Key Note Speaker at the Luncheon and I had the pleasure of introducing her. she gave a fiery speech about caring for all aspects of children's lives, not only day care issues. She is a very passionate woman with a positive vision.

After lunch there were more workshops then a wrap up session. The conference was very thought provoking and helped me to see how far we have come and where we have to go.

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COMPUTERS! COMPUTERS!

Yes, we now have a computer. The Ministry of Community and Social Services funded our Communications Enhancement Project with a grant of $11,700.

The Day Care "Network" has vastly expanded since 1985 and our mailing list now exceeds 200 regional people. (If you move, please let us know so that we can continue to keep you informed with the newsletter.) As you can imagine the computer will greatly assist us in preparing the newsletter and briefs for hearings on child care legislation etc.

Many child care centres have branched out on their own with computer systems, whether it be for financial administration, or for the children's use. The Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee will be surveying all day care centres to determine what systems are in use in the region. This survey will be mailed out to each centre in June.

The data from this survey will be used for two purposes.
1) To plan a conference that will allow a unique opportunity for the many volunteers and staff involved with child care to liaise and network with professionals in the communications field.
2) To assist the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care in developing appropriate, low-cost comprehensive computer software for child care programs in Ontario.

The 1987 Report on Northwestern Ontario Day Care Workers, indicated the need for a variety of professional development opportunities, one of which was computer training.

The growth in this area has been so rapid that many individuals have not had the opportunity of time to explore this field. With the major suppliers located in Thunder Bay it is also difficult for regional centres to access information without incurring great expenses. A workshop designed around the modern communications field will increase the networking between the communications experts and between centres that are using similar equipment.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ
(from page 5)

1. c) $267.00
2. b) 66%
3. b) $324.00
4. a) 47%
5. fallen
6. a) 19%

Thank you to the Ontario Coalition For Better Child Care for this Quiz.

BUDGET BACKGROUNDER

By The Ontario Coalition For Better Child Care

The Treasurer of Ontario has announced a new budget for child care. The Treasurer announced a 16% increase in child care spending for this budget year to $386 million. On Thursday, April 26, Minister of Community and Social Services, Charles Beer, made an announcement in the House as a follow-up to the Treasurer's announcement, specifying that:

$10 million would be available to assist municipalities

$10 million would be available for **new** community -based and new school non-profit child care programs

No announcements were made concerning enhanced salary grants or direct operating grants for child care staff.

Our preliminary analysis of the budget indicates:

1. That the budget is really only for $384 million because $12 million for Ministry of Education capital has been included in child care spending of 10.6% over last year's estimated expenditures of $347 million.
2. That new subsidized spaces will be limited to programs which have received MCSS capital and start-up funding in the last year. This means that municipalities wishing to serve parents on their waiting lists in existing programs will have to find the funds out of the additional monies supposedly set aside to assist municipalities "facing extreme pressures" which prevent them from purchasing spaces in the community.
3. That no additional funds are available to enhance the direct operating grant program (over and above an annual inflation rate) and assist with the raising of wages. This is particularly appalling in view of the following facts:

   Average child care worker wage, 1989 $16,852.00

   Child care wages as % of average industrial wage 47%

   Compared to % of av. ind. wage, 1984 -19%

   Visiting homemakers and workers in other community-based agencies have received 1990-91 budget allocations to assist in raising wages.
4. In order to maintain its commitment to New Directions, the Government had to increase the budget by **at least** 30% per year. This meagre 10.6% increase can only mean that the provincial government has abandoned its commitment to make child care in Ontario a public service.

Note: At the Coalition's Annual Conference the Honourable Charles made it quite clear that the Government was abandoning New Directions.

KEEPING CHILD CARE ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA

It is up to individuals involved with child care to ensure that it remains on the political agenda. Meetings with politicians to discuss your issue are very important. Meet in their office or better yet invite them to your centre, they are always looking for a photo opportunity for their householder, which is distributed to the riding three or four times per year.

The following news clippings may interest you.

Chronicle-Journal, Apr 30/90 p. 19.

Child-care services topic for meeting

GUELPH, Ont. (CP) — Federal cutbacks to the provinces could slow growth in child-care services, says Ontario Community and Social Services Minister Charles Beer.

"If the federal government does not become more active in this field, then it means less dollars and that means slower growth," Beer said Saturday after a speech to about 300 members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

Coalition members, meeting in Guelph over the weekend, were unhappy with Beer's prediction.

"It really is not acceptable that the provincial government is going to wait until there is action from the federal government — which will likely be inappropriate action when it does come," said Margaret Phillips of Thunder Bay.

Gordon Cleveland of Toronto said the province could have directed some of its operating surplus in the recent budget to child care instead of paying off the debt.

Ontario's share of the child-care cost burden has increased 27 per cent to $257 million, including $10 million for new licensed child-care spaces in schools and non-profit centres, Beer said.

Day-care workers demand more pay

By John Deverell
TORONTO STAR

Some of Ontario's 18,000 day-care teachers are showing signs of rebelling against $9-an-hour wages.

Twenty of them, with two dozen kids in tow, took over the labor minister's boardroom yesterday to dramatize their demand for higher pay.

They want Labor Minister Gerry Phillips to include them in the Pay Equity Act. The day-care teachers, nearly all women, want to be compared with, say, male technicians at the agriculture ministry who get $15 an hour for sorting seeds and tending plants.

Phillips' executive assistant heard the complaint and promised a meeting with the minister on Monday.

Day-care workers' low wages can't be raised by fee increases to parents "who are having trouble coping already," said Laurel Rothman, a vice-president of the Coalition for Better Child Care.

Phillips told reporters later the problem can't be addressed through the Pay Equity Act in its present form.

The province currently contributes about $2,750 in direct grants toward the average full-time day-care salary of $16,850 a year. For 1990 the payments will total $60 million, an average of $460 for each of the 130,000 children in licensed day care.

MEMBERSHIP

At the 1988 Forum a membership structure for the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee was approved. Memberships are now available. Membership categories are:

Category A: Municipal Councils/Indian Band Council; Day Care Centres; Professional Organizations; Regional Associations; Labour Unions.
Fee: $50.00

Category B: Parent Groups, Voluntary Community Organizations.
Fee: $25.00

Category C: Individuals.
Fee: $5.00

To join, please complete this application form, detach and return to: N.W.O.R.D.C.C.
P.O. Box 144
Thunder Bay, Ont.
P7C 4V5

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I believe in the purpose of The Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee and I wish to become a member.

_____
Signature

Name:_____

Address:_____

Postal Code:_____

Phone Number:_____Fee Enclosed_____

Category: A____ B_____ C_____

Thank you for your support.