Northwestern Ontario Day Care News

May 1988

NWO 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

N.W.O.R.D.C.C. Structure and Membership

The growth and maturation of the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee prompted your Steering Committee to recommend a more formal structure for our organization, which was adopted at the Regional Forum in February. A COUNCIL of fifteen representatives (three from each provincial political constituency) will direct the activities of the organization and will meet (at least) three times per year. An EXECUTIVE of five (one from each political constituency) will meet as required between Council meetings to carry out NWORDCC work. Your 1988 Council members are: (*denotes executive) Leila Daciw (Thunder Bay, F), Sharon Hart (Thunder Bay, F) Heather Hawkes (Thunder Bay P), Fiona Karlstedt* (Thunder Bay, P), Phyllis Kellar (Fort Frances), Veronica Kreidl (Marathon), Wilma Molinaro (Red Rock), Paula Nelligan (Thunder Bay, F), Anita Price (Thunder Bay, P), Brenda Rikkonen* (Thunder Bay F), Holly Rupert* (Red Lake), Diane Sarrazin (Geraldton), Eva Shields (Atikokan), Donna Wasykowski* (Fort Frances), Marilyn Wells (Sioux Lookout), Janet Wilkinson (Sioux Lookout).

The Forum also approved a membership structure and fees. 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

A membership Committee has been formed, and a membership campaign will be organized. Details about how you can help with the membership campaign will be sent to you at a later date.

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Your membership Committee is looking for a logo to appropriately represent the NWORDCC. Your ideas (designs) would be welcomed. ...please send them to Veronica Kreidl, Box 998, Marathon.

The first meeting of your new Council was held March 19 and an extensive agenda was productively covered. Issues dealt with included direct grants, the Funding Advisory Committee, federal policy, day care workers qualifications and (our) budget. Priorities established for 1988/89 are (1) weighting factor; (2) Funding Advisory Committee; and (3) membership campaign.

REGIONAL NEWS

RED ROCK

Submitted by Wilma Molinaro

On Sunday April 24, 1988, Red Rock Day Care Centre hosted an "Open House" for the public to come and see the new Centre. The Day Care is located in the basement of the new library expansion and has just been newly-renovated.

Over 100 people attended the Open House and M.P. Ernie Epp and Mrs. Epp drove in from Thunder Bay to see the new facility. Ruth Wells, Program Supervisor from the Ministry of Community and Social Services and her son Andrew also attended.

The Day Care has children attending since May 2nd and the Centre can accommodate 20 children. Anyone wishing to see our new centre is more than welcome to come by. Our phone number is 886-2568.

The Official Opening ceremonies for the centre will be held June 7th.

GERALDTON

Submitted by Diane Sarrazin

Teachers and children have been busy visiting the community. Tour of Daneff's Food Market, tour of the Royal Bank, spring walk looking for pussy willows, tour of the fire station, and visit from the ambulance. We are looking forward to visiting our local OPP detachment and MNR fire base in the near future.

During May we hosted a Mother's Day Tea and eighth Family Night Supper.

Due to recent government grants allocated to the centre and the Rural Resource Program we have purchased a computer which we hope will be set up soon with our school age children.

We continue to have a long waiting list especially for the children ranging from 4-6 years of age.

FORT FRANCES

Submitted by Phyllis Kellar

The Fort Frances Day Care and Child Development Centre is still full with a long waiting list.

Town Council has made a decision about the direct grant and has decided that this money will be paid in 1988 as a direct earned bonus payment, for the Day Care Supervisor, Teachers, Cook and substitute staff.

CONTINUED

The Day Care staff enjoyed taking part in the picture book campaign and many thanks for the photo copy of our contribution to the picture book. We had a successful Mother's Day Luncheon at the Centre. The children made cards, gifts and corsages for their moms and made dinner for them which they all enjoyed. It was a successful event with 71 in attendance.

MARATHON

Submitted by Veronica Kreidl

Things are going well here at the centre. We received a grant from the Trillium Foundation for $12,600. The money will be spent on toys, equipment, supplies and on staff development.

We have also received the direct grant from COMSOC. This money will be used to increase staff salaries which everybody is thrilled about.

We presently have 98 children in total registered in the Marathon Day Care program. This is great to see.

FEDERAL POLICY

In response to the federal government's National Strategy on Child Care, the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee prepared a position paper which was sent to Prime Minister Mulroney, Health & Welfare Minister Jake Epp, opposition critics, and all Northwestern Ontario MPs and MPPs.

The focus of our paper was that the proposed strategy was regressive; the new Child Care Act would have the effect of restricting rather than expanding child care spaces; that tax measures will be ineffective and do nothing for child care. We re-iterated our position that quality child care will only be provided by the expansion of the non-profit sector, and expressed concern with the government's unprecedented support to commercial day care operations.

We pointed out that the representations by Northwestern Ontario day care people to the Special Committee on Child Care had been ignored, and the federal strategy does not address our recommendations for a comprehensive, high-quality, non-profit child care system.

We recommended that the proposed strategy be abandoned and be replaced by a national strategy with clear objectives and criteria that will ensure that all Canadian families have equal access to licensed child care services, and that the federal government provide adequate financial resources to the provinces to ensure a comprehensive child care system is developed.

Copies of our position paper are available...just write us at Box 144, Thunder Bay, P7C 4V5.

The Federal child care policy must be stopped. Contact your MP and MPP today to express your concern.



DIRECT OPERATING GRANT

The long-awaited Direct Operating Grant has been implemented (retroactive to January 1, 1988) by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. For many years, the Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee, (and others) have advocated for the direct grant, and we welcome the news that the grant is "in place". The implementation of the grant is, however, not without its problems, and the impact of the direct grant must be monitored.

The first priority for the use of the direct grant is to increase existing staff salaries and/or benefits and to increase payments to (PHDC) providers. However, the Ministry's guidelines provide for "special circumstances" whereby a municipality/Board of Directors may make application for an exemption, and use the grant for other purposes (e.g. reducing transitional subsidy).

It is unfortunate that the guidelines have provided "exceptions", as this is leading to considerable inconsistency in the use of the funds across the province. What should have been a tremendous morale booster for all day care workers is, for some, having the opposite effect, and may result in further inequities.

We are pleased to note that many Northwestern Ontario centres have applied the direct grant to wages and benefits. But it is very discouraging to learn that several centres are not intending to use the grant for this purpose.

Whether or not the direct grant works well is dependent on the goodwill of the municipality/Board of Directors (and in some cases the union). Serious inconsistencies in the implementation of the direct grant can only augment the problems of our troubled child care system. WE STRONGLY URGE YOU TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND KEEP THE N.W.O.R.D.C.C. INFORMED OF THE WAY THE DIRECT OPERATING GRANT IS BEING USED IN YOUR COMMUNITY. Your information is essential for the NWORDCC to be able to make recommendations to the Ministry to improve the process.

The Ministry's guidelines concerning the grant are outlined in a booklet entitled Child Care Direct Operating Grants, Guidelines and Procedures: Non-Profit Sector. Your municipality/Board of Directors should have received this booklet. Or obtain a copy by contacting your Area COMSOC office.

Many people have expressed interest in learning the "formula" for direct grant funding. The following excerpt from the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care newsletter provides an example of the funding formula.

What is "The Formula" for Calculation of The Direct Operating Grant?

Complete details about the funding formulae can be obtained from the Guidelines, but it might be of interest to indicate how the formula works with a practical example. Essentially, the formula weights factors of age, hours of operation, and months of service, with a point system, the result of which is then multiplied by a dollar value to determine the annual (or quarterly) grant.

(Operating Capacity X Age Weightings) X Months Open = Total Points

On an annual basis, a centre with an enrollment of 10 infant, 15 toddler and 32 pre-school children which operated from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. for twelve months of the year could expect to receive:

For Infants:

$$\frac{(10 \text{ Infants X } 36 \text{ Points}) \text{ X } 12 \text{ months}}{1} = 4{,}320 \text{ POINTS}$$

For Toddlers:

$$\frac{(15 \text{ Toddlers X } 24 \text{ Points}) \text{ X } 12 \text{ months}}{1} = 4{,}320 \text{ POINTS}$$

For Pre-school

$$\frac{(32 \text{ Pre-school X } 15 \text{ Points}) \text{ X } 12 \text{ months}}{1} = 5{,}760 \text{ POINTS}$$

The point value allowed to this centre totals: 14,400 POINTS

In 1988, each point is valued at $4.12 for the year. As a result, in this example, the centre would receive a direct grant, divided into quarterly payments of $14,832. and totalling $59,328 for the year.

Take pride that your advocacy has helped in making direct grants a reality, but realize that continued advocacy will be required to develop the comprehensive and adequately funded child care system we deserve.

C.D.C.A.A. CONFERENCE

Rejection of the federal government's "National Strategy on Child Care" was the unifying force that dominated the second National Child Care Conference held in Ottawa in April. Sponsored by the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association the Conference brought together over 500 delegates from across Canada, including six Northwestern Ontario representations. Day care workers, parents, administrators, educators, advocates from Newfoundland to the Yukon were united in their opposition to the federal strategy and determined to take all possible action to reverse this policy.

The federal government's lack of concern for child care was evidenced by the Prime Minister's and senior cabinet members failure to accept the C.D.C.A.A.'s invitation to attend the Conference to receive the "Picture Book" which had been compiled by day care groups across the country (see article on our contribution to Picture Book Campaign page 7). It was further evidenced when no senior government member attended the lobby. The Conservative backbenchers who did attend the lobby were, however, given a very clear message, as delegate after delegate rose to explain why the federal policy failed to meet their community's need.

The unwillingness of senior Conservative members to meet with the major Canadian child care organization was an object lesson for all who attended the Conference. The need for increased political action by all day care advocates is very clear, and delegates left the lobby determined to redouble their efforts to achieve appropriate day care policy.

While the federal strategy was the key issue for all attending this well organized conference, delegates also participated in a series of informative workshops, and developed new networks that will strengthen our community work.

FREE TRADE FORUM

The Threat to Non-profit Child Care in Canada
(reprinted from the Toronto Star, April 21, 1988)

This fall, while Canadian and American trade negotiators hammered out final details of the free trade agreement, child care advocates fearfully speculated about the future of child care in Canada.

It was rumoured that new federal proposals would flow funds to commercial child care businesses, encouraging American companies to cross the border to operate in this country and ending our ability to create our own high quality child care system. Speculation that the free trade agreement would include human services as tradeable items further fueled these concerns.

The details of both the free trade deal and the federal child care strategy are now public. The potential effects of the combination are alarming.

U.S. Child Care Policy

Child care policy in the United States is more poorly developed than that of any of the industrialized (and many non-industrialized) countries; indeed, the United States even lacks a national maternity leave policy. An effort to establish a national child care policy failed with former President Richard Nixon's veto of a major bill in 1971, and an attempt to upgrade federal child care standards was derailed in the late 1970s. There is no provision for funding child care services per se and in President Ronald Reagan's era, subsidies for low income children have become almost impossible to secure.

In the absence of a national policy and public fund, child care in America is viewed as a commodity sold in the marketplace. The gap is partly filled by businesses that primarily aim at the middle class market. Increasingly, these are operated by a few multi-million dollar corporations with substantial venture capital and the capacity to expand into new market.

Currently, our federal government imposes no barrier to the establishment of American child care businesses in Canada nor to the subsidization of families using these services under the social assistance provisions of the Canada Assistance Plan. Some provincial governments have established their own criteria. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nova Scotia have limited the growth or support of commercial services; other, such as Alberta, have encouraged and heavily subsidized commercial operations.

The recently announced federal proposals set a dangerous precedent. For the first time, provinces may use federal funds to fund businesses directly and provide subsidies in commercial programs more easily. Child care advocates fear that this will act as an incentive to American companies, with their large pools of capital, to locate in Canada.

Government Denials

Throughout the fall, Barbara McDougall, Minister Reponsible for Women's Issues, and Welfare Minister, Jake Epp, said that child care had been explicitly excluded from the free trade agreement. Indeed, it is not listed as a tradeable service in the provisions of the trade agreement that specifically deal with services. Interpretations of other portions of the agreement, however, suggest that it could be impossible for a provincial government to deny U.S. entrepreneurs access to public funding for child care in Canada.

Further, the agreement could make it impossible for a government to deny American companies funds available to other child care programs, even capital funds. Trade observers believe it likely that one section, Clause 2011 could give rise to a pressure point against the development of a non-profit child care system.

The impact of the free trade agreement on the development of a child care system in Canada is a matter of interpretation and conjecture. There are, however, red flags that indicate danger, and we would be well-advised to heed them. For Canada, child care, like health care, education and other human services, should not be a trading matter-free or otherwise.

Martha Friendly
Child Care Resource & Research Unit
University of Toronto

The Chronicle-Journal **Modern Living**
Saturday, April 9, 1988 21

Childcare picturebook makes way to city

By JO-ANN MIHALICH
Chronicle-Journal Staff

The Northwestern Ontario Regional Day Care Committee and the Thunder Bay Advocates for Quality Child Care will be 'throwing the book' at Ottawa this month to denounce the government's national strategy on child care.

The two groups are taking part in a picture book campaign to highlight their opposition to the child care plan. Co-sponsored by the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Daycare Advocacy Association, the campaign provides an opportunity for the public to demonstrate support for the development of a comprehensive child care system.

At a press conference Thursday night at the constituency office of MP Ernie Epp (NDP-Thunder Bay-Nipigon), committee council member Anita Price unveiled the large binder-type book. The picturebook — to be on display in Ottawa April 22 — has been moving across Canada gathering pictures and messages along its way.

Price says Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has been invited to attend the opening of the exhibit and will receive their message that the Tory child care strategy will impede the development of child care in Canada and should be withdrawn.

"The federal government needs to know how parents, early childhood educators and concerned citizens feel about the national strategy on child care," said Price, in her address.

In presenting Epp and MP Iain Angus (NDP-Thunder Bay-Atikokan) with a copy of the N.W.O. contribution to the book, Price said, "We as your constituents, call upon you to take action and see that the national child care policy be re-evaluated."

The N.W.O. contribution includes snapshots of interviews with those in the day care industry and with early childhood education students of Confederation College.

Price also presented Epp and Angus with a brief in response to the government's national strategy on child care, prepared by the N.W.O. Regional Day Care Committee.



MPs ERNIE EPP AND IAIN ANGUS WITH ANITA PRICE, RIGHT
...display giant photo album travelling across Canada

She said during the federal study by the special committee on child care, many N.W.O. people made presentations in Dryden and Thunder Bay. N.W.O. presenters consistently advocated for a comprehensive, high quality, non-profit child care system.

"Our recommendations to the special committee stressed our desire for the federal government to give leadership and support to the provinces and territories with adequate financial resources to provide the comprehensive, high quality, non-profit system that we need."

Presenters also stressed quality care and the need for workers to be trained in early childhood education as well as the issue of adequate wages. Price feels that the N.W.O. representations were ignored by the special committee. She says the strategy does not provide the direction or the financial resources to achieve a comprehensive child care system.

The child care strategy's provision for spaces and the tax measures are of major concern to both groups. With a demonstrated need for one million spaces this year, Price says the proposed 200,000 new spaces over seven years is "clearly inadequate."

N.W.O. reps did not recommend tax measures. Tax deductions will do nothing to create new day care spaces. Price argues that tax credits "do not address the issue of quality care and do not make care more affordable or available."

"Another issue we felt was not properly addressed is the support of the commercial sector. We are appalled by the unprecedented support to commercial day care operations that the strategy implies."

Within communities currently operating programs, the need for expansion is apparent, most particularly for infant care, school-ag programs, emergency care an services for shift-working familie she said. As well, many commu nities are without any child car services and require a range of pr grams.

"The needs of N.W.O. can be m by a significant infusion of gover ment spending — the spending in th form of direct operating and capit grants to non-profit day care organ zations."

Referring to the national chil care strategy, Angus said the Torie "blew it."

The politician said the govern ment didn't establish national objec tives in which federal money woul be available for child care spaces The government should have cre ated a fixed number of spaces a well as placed funding at an ad equate level "that makes it accessi ble regardless of income."

In the 1984 election, Epp said the NDP "pressed hard" to institute a national child care program and his government will continue the figh for quality child care. Angus said day care very well could be a "na tional platform" for the NDP in the next federal election.

"We see it as the social issue o our time," Epp said.

The picture book campaign launched in Toronto on Feb. 27 and has since travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, North York, Hearst, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. The book's next destination is Sar-

Tor. Star Sat May 14/88

Non-profit day-care does the best job study shows

By Leslie Fruman Toronto Star

Children in non-profit centres in Metro get better day care than those in centres run for profit, a government study has found.

The study found that commercial centres violate the Ontario Day Nurseries Act and fail to meet minimum standards far more often than non-profit centres.

"I think it's very clear that in major issues, commercially operated centres aren't operated as well," study author Sharon West said.

"You could say they're not as good," said West, who was hired by the Ministry of Community and Social Services for the review.

The study, done at The Star's request, found that from March, 1987, to February, 1988:

- Almost 54 per cent of commercial centres failed to have enough qualified staff as required by the act, compared to 15 per cent of parent- or community-run non-profit centres. Five different kinds of non-profit centres were included in the study.
- Commercial centres took long-

See NON—PROFIT/page A10

Non-profit centres do best in study

Continued from page A1

er than other centres to correct staffing problems.

Ninety-five per cent of non-profit centres with parent or community boards solved staff shortages within six months, compared to 77 per cent of commercial centres. In fact, 11 per cent of commercial centres still had staff shortages after 10 months.

- Parents at commercial centres complained more than twice as often as parents at other centres about the way they were run. The study found 33 per cent of commercial centres had complaints lodged against them, compared to 13 per cent of non-profit centres.

Of 133 complaints lodged with the province, 99 of them were about commercial centres. Although commercial centres represent only 42 per of the centres studied, they received 74 per cent of the complaints.

- Commercial centres more often than non-profit centres had restricted licences because of act violations. While 21 per cent of commercial operators had short-term licences, only 6.8 per cent of non-profit community-run centres had the same type of restricted licence.
- Commercial centres were visited more often by the ministry's program advisers because of problems or complaints than any other type of centre.

The study shows commercial centres were each visited an average of 4.7 times, while non-profit parent or community board centres were each visited 3.2 times.

"Program adivsers spent more of their time at commercially operated centres than non-profit parent/community board operated centres, and most of this time was for quality-control reasons," the report says.

The findings come on the heels of announcements by Ottawa and Queen's Park that commercial centres will receive government aid for the first time.

Though the study shows commercial centres have the worst record, it also reveals that not all non-profit centres are the same.

It shows that non-profit centres run by churches or by boards that don't include parents don't meet the requirements as often as those where parents have a say.