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August 20, 2014

To Ontario mayors and councils,

We are writing to ask that you and your council endorse a day of recognition for the many people who work providing care to children in your community. This year will mark the 14th anniversary of our awareness day which recognizes the education, skills, commitment and dedication of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) and child care staff.

The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC), the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and other labour partners representing child care and ECE workers across Ontario are asking that Wednesday, October 29, 2014, be proclaimed as ***Child Care Worker & Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day*** in accordance with the attached resolution.

Many groups are recognized by way of municipal resolution. Such a day allows the community to recognize the work of various groups and to acknowledge the contributions they make in the lives of community members.

Many children, families and communities benefit from the work of child care workers and ECEs. Child care and early learning also contribute to the economic life of communities. Research shows the many economic benefits accrued from affordable, accessible high quality early learning and child care. These benefits come from the number of people employed in the child care industry and because the availability of child care allows parents to work and retrain and to contribute to the economic life of society.

Even if your council does not issue official proclamations, there are many ways for your municipality to participate in and celebrate this special day. We ask your council to sponsor public announcements, display our posters and distribute our buttons. Many municipalities also organize events and contests for the day or have councilors or the mayor participate in events hosted by child care centres within the municipality. A list of ideas and examples is attached.

This year, Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day (October 29) is just a few days after the municipal election (October 27). Between now and then we will be asking those of you running for re-election and other candidates for election, to make investment in child care services in your community a priority issue in your campaign. Above all, we encourage you to engage in a dialogue about the benefits of affordable, high quality child care services in your community. And we invite you to express your commitment to better child care by signing the pledge at www.idependonchildcare.ca/candidates

We would like to acknowledge those municipalities celebrating child care and ECE workers across on Ontario on October 29. Do let us know whether your municipality is participating in the recognition day. Please direct any correspondence on proclamations and/or celebration activities to the attention of Uliana Siniavskaia, by mail: CUPE, 80 Commerce Valley Drive East, Markham, Ontario, L3T 0B2 or by fax at 905-739-3999.

Thank you for your consideration.
In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Hahn".

Fred Hahn
President, CUPE Ontario Division
cc: CMSMs/DSSABs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sheila Olan-Maclean".

Sheila Olan-Maclean
President, OCBCC

14th Annual Child Care Worker & Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day October 29, 2014

Ideas to Recognize the Day

- ☆ Support the resolution declaring October 29th Child Care Worker & Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.
- ☆ Distribute buttons and posters – visit www.childcareontario.org for an order form for free materials including posters and buttons.
- ☆ Host an appreciation breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- ☆ This year our theme “Let’s Rethink Child Care: Together We Can Make It Better” invites child care advocates to actively participate in a National multi-year campaign to put child care back on the agenda. The first step is for municipalities, schools, child care centers, workers, parents and other child care advocates to host a “kitchen table conversation”. Please visit the campaign website at www.rethinkchildcare.ca to learn more about how to host a “kitchen table discussion”.

Municipalities

- ☆ Encourage local Councilors to tour a child care centre or early learning program to learn more about the work of ECE’s. Event could also generate media coverage in local papers.
- ☆ Take out an ad in the local newspaper.
- ☆ Take nominations from local child care centres for outstanding staff to be recognized by the Mayor through a letter, announcement or event.
- ☆ Distribute information on the day to all centres and agencies with child care staff.
- ☆ Organize a community-wide celebration to recognize individual staff or centres and programs.

School Boards

- ☆ Encourage school board trustees to tour an early learning program to learn more about the work of ECE’s. Event could also generate media coverage in local papers.
- ☆ Arrange to have the day announced on the school PA with the morning announcements.
- ☆ Notify parents in advance. Set up a “Wall of Fame” for parents to help in writing words of thanks to each of the staff. Laminate afterwards for the staff to keep.
- ☆ Notify other staff in the school and host an event with cake or dessert in the staff room.

Local Child Care Centers, Boards of Directors

- ★ Distribute carnations to staff working in child care centres.
- ★ Start the day right with a breakfast. Distribute buttons and posters and certificates of appreciation to all staff.
- ★ Have the board of directors take the staff out for dinner and an evening of fun.
- ★ Host an afternoon tea party (with desserts provided by parents) for all the staff and children.
- ★ Host coffee, tea, and treats from 4:00 pm. to 7:30 pm. to accommodate staff finishing shifts.
- ★ Give each staff member a certificate of appreciation.
- ★ Have the board of directors send out a notice to each family and ask that they contribute a fruit, jam, tea, to fill a basket for all the staff.
- ★ Have the Board of Directors provide homemade cards and chocolates.
- ★ Make a bulletin board with posters and place the certificates of appreciation on the board.
- ★ Host a Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day event with a guest motivational speaker and refreshments.
- ★ Set up a "Wall of Fame" for parents to help in writing words of thanks to each of the staff. Laminate afterwards for the staff to keep.
- ★ Have the board of directors send a letter to all families and board members accompanied by a cut-out of a hand. Ask parents to write a note to staff on the hand as a way of "giving the staff a hand" for a job well done. Then display the hands in the centre.
- ★ Put up a big poster with the staff's 'bios' and photo and have the parents sign a message on it.
- ★ Distribute cards hand made by children and parents.
- ★ Send staff a letter from the board thanking them for their commitment to children and families.
- ★ Make a donation on behalf of the staff to a shelter for women and children in your community.
- ★ Host a pizza lunch for the staff.
- ★ Have the Board of Directors host an evening of celebration for all staff in honour of Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.
- ★ Have community businesses sponsor the day and give discounts and gifts to all staff or provide door prizes for appreciation events, or gift bag items.

This is just a short list of activities - there are many things you can do to recognize and celebrate the valuable role child care staff play in the lives of children, families and communities. Please contact the OCBCC for further information, posters, buttons and certificates of appreciation.

Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care
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