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For immediate release:

Charitable, academic, and private sector leaders urge Ottawa limit child care funds to non-profit/public providers

The Federal Budget 2021 provides \$30 Billion over 5 years for the building of a “Canada-wide, community-based system of quality child care.” It compares a quality child care system to public schools: “Just as public school provides children with quality education in their neighbourhoods, the government’s goal is to ensure that all families have access to high-quality, affordable and flexible early learning and child care no matter where they live.”

Ottawa further commits to working with provinces and territories to build such a system through “primarily not-for-profit sector child care providers ... while ensuring that families in all licensed spaces benefit from more affordable child care.”

The federal position is backed by national and international evidence showing that child care systems dominated by not-for-profit and public providers, are more inclusive of low-income families, and deliver higher quality services at lower costs.

Recognizing that much of Canada’s child care services now operate as commercial ventures, the intention is not to abolish for-profit child care, rather to ensure public funds do not support its growth in existing or new programs. Already established for-profit services that meet quality standards, charge government-regulated parent fees, and are financially transparent to ensure accountability for public funds, would receive support.

Non-profit and public providers are the best partners for governments to build a Canada-wide child care system. The sector is able to offer a variety of flexible, high quality early learning and child care choices to all families without compromising program quality, or safety and working conditions. Expanding partnerships with the non-profit/public sectors will have positive cascading effects for children, parents – especially mothers, the early childhood workforce, communities and the broader economy for years to come.

The undersigned recommend:

1. Targeting all federal investments for expanding early learning and child care across Canada exclusively to non-profit and public providers.
2. Providing federal capital investments for building new early learning and child care spaces and retrofitting existing spaces exclusively to non-profit and public providers.
3. Investing in non-profit and public infrastructure to support the effective planning and equitable development of child care services.

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