

Ministry of Education

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April 27, 2010

Dear colleagues,

Today, our government announced some exciting steps we are taking to implement our vision for a seamless and integrated system to support Ontario's children and families.

This morning, the Legislature passed the *Full-Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010*. This act amends the *Education Act* to mandate that all school boards offer full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds, including the integrated before- and after-school programs. It will provide us with a clearer framework as we move forward with the implementation of full-day learning.

Thank you to everyone who provided valuable input on the bill. Your feedback, as well as that received from our early learning stakeholders, led to some amendments that make it a stronger piece of legislation. The amendments clarify that boards retain the right to enter into agreements with third-party providers to provide care and offer before- and after-school programs for children ages six to twelve. Such agreements could also permit third parties to operate programs at elementary schools for children of all ages, outside of the regular school year (for example, on professional development days or during summer holidays).

In addition, our government intends to introduce regulations that would allow third-party providers currently providing programs in schools to continue to offer, on a transitional basis, before- and after-school programs for four- and five-year-olds during the regular school year.

Child care will be transferred from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to the Ministry of Education. Bringing child care and education together under one ministry will create a more integrated system that facilitates smoother transitions for young children and their families. The transfer will take place in phases, starting today with the movement of policy and program responsibilities. Funding and contract management responsibilities will follow this fall.

In addition, the government will provide funding to help stabilize child care. To address the movement of four- and five-year-olds into the full-day learning system, our government has committed stabilization funding that will be phased in over the period of implementation, growing to \$51 million annually at full implementation to help stabilize child care centres as four- and five-year-olds move into the full-day learning program. We have also committed \$12 million over five years in new capital funding to help non-profit child care centres with retrofits and renovations to help younger children.

The Minister of Children and Youth Services will work with Dr. Charles Pascal on how to integrate supports for young families. In his report, Dr. Pascal recommended an integrated network of Best Start Child and Family Centres. Minister Broten and Dr. Pascal will work with the multiple programs and agencies providing supports for parents of infants and young children to identify how their services could be integrated to allow parents to access them in a more coordinated way.

Our vision for a more integrated early learning system is based on recommendations from Dr. Charles Pascal's report, [With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario](#). As Dr. Pascal stated in his report, to fully benefit from full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds we must also have a coordinated child and family support system that offers a continuum of services for children from birth to age 12. Bringing child care and education together under one ministry is an important step towards that coordinated system.

I ask for your support as we move forward on this transformational initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leona Dombrowsky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of Education