

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministry of Children
and Youth Services

Ministère des Services
à l'enfance et à la jeunesse



April 27, 2010

Dear colleagues,

Today, we announced some exciting steps we are taking to implement our government's vision for a seamless and integrated system to support Ontario's children and their 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 all of the education and early learning stakeholders who provided valuable input on the bill. Your feedback led to some amendments which make it a stronger piece of legislation. The amendments clarify that school 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, on a transitional basis, continue to offer 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. 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. 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 Child Care Unit within the Strategic Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will be moving to the Ministry of Education's Early Learning Division. Your key contacts in the Child Care Unit and in regional offices will remain the same. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact them. Your co-operation and commitment as we move forward together on this transformational initiative is most appreciated.

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 serve 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 creating 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 co-ordinated 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 Full-Day 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 co-ordinated 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 co-ordinated system.

We thank you for your ongoing dedication to Ontario's children and families and ask for your support as we move forward on this transformational initiative.

Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Leona Dombrowsky' and the signature on the right is 'Laurel Broten'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leona Dombrowsky
Minister of Education

Laurel Broten
Minister of Children and Youth Services