

**Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day
A message from OSSTF/FEESO president Karen Littlewood**

Hello, my name is Karen Littlewood, and I am the President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation. I want to take some time today to celebrate the child care workers and early childhood educators who work across this province.

In Ontario, October 21st is Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.

OSSTF/FEESO has a diverse membership that includes child care workers and ECEs working in English and French schools and worksites all across Ontario— in Thunder Bay, Eganville, Chelmsford, Ottawa, Kitchener, Langton, and so many other places in between.

These workers are integral members of the education team, and that is why we, as members of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, want to thank them for all they have done and continue to do to support the future of this province.

This year marks the 21st anniversary of commemoration recognizing the commitment, hard work, and dedication of child care workers and early childhood educators who support and educate the youngest children in the province every day.

As a proud sponsor of this day, OSSTF/FEESO is committed to drawing attention to the value of ECEs and child care workers who are integral to providing safe, engaging, and educational environments in our communities – in child care centres and schools across Ontario.

The contributions that ECEs and child care workers make every day in our communities are extraordinary. On behalf of the entire OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Executive, I want to recognize them for it!

For young children, these workers are heroes and, for families, despite the numerous ongoing challenges associated with the global pandemic, these workers continue to be critical to the COVID19 recovery and particularly to women's participation in the economy.

However, thank you is not enough. OSSTF/FEESO is extremely disappointed that there was no mention of education and child care during the recent Throne Speech. Once again, the Ford government shortchanged the children, families, and workers of this province.

Today we must take this opportunity to call for better wages working conditions and support for these workers. And, we encourage all OSSTF/FEESO members and the public to call on the government to say yes to the Roadmap to Universal Child Care in Ontario, which sets out a vision and a path forward for Ontario child care.

It is time to respect early learning and child care heroes and to recognize their value with decent work and pay and making universal child care a reality in Ontario.

OSSTF/FEESO will continue to advocate for improvements in the education and child care sector and for its workers because we know that prioritizing investment in workers and the future of this province is vital to Ontario's social and economic health.

To all the child care workers and early childhood educators in Ontario, OSSTF/FEESO says

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