

**For Immediate Release
Saturday February 12, 2005**

YWCA Canada urges Dryden to uphold his commitment to quality child care.

YWCA Canada encourages Minister Ken Dryden to uphold his vision of a national child care program that supports the QUAD principles and is accountable to the Canadian public.

"An effective agreement that will see provinces prove their accountability to quality service must be reached", says Elaine Teofilovici, CEO YWCA Canada.

"The provinces need to develop substantive plans that contain the details of how each intends to meet the QUAD principles. This means taking a hard look at three decades of evidence based research that tells us that quality and accountability will only be achieved through expansion in the non-profit sector", adds Teofilovici.

In the meantime, while we wait for a deal, there are 2.1 million children under 6 years of age in Canada and only 315,000 regulated child care spaces.

To those provinces claiming they will only sign a deal that will uphold a parent's right to choose, Teofilovici explains, "We are calling for a national child care program that is part of family support system, not mandatory institutionalized child care." She goes on to say, "The reality is that the vast majority of parents with young children in Canada are seeking child care but simply can't find it or can't afford it. This needs to change."

The Canadian economy has come to rely on women's participation in the workforce. Seventy per cent of mothers in Canada work outside of the home. A national child care system that is universally accessible, affordable and grounded in childhood development principles will be a huge gain for the women of Canada and for all families in general.

Historically, national programs in Canada have been started by a few visionary provinces. "YWCA Canada will support federal bi-lateral agreements with provinces willing to live up to research based accountability standards, if this will jump start the process", concludes Teofilovici.

YWCA Canada is the national office of 36 YWCAs and YMCA-YWCAs that offer community based services to more than 1,000,000 women and their families every year. Twenty-four of our associations operate standard child care programs and three others offer childcare related programs. Together they cumulate 4,550 licensed childcare spaces and in 2003 served at least 10,000 children; making YWCA Canada the second largest national provider of non-profit child care service in Canada.

-30-

For more information contact:

Elaine Teofilovici, CEO YWCA Canada (416) 962-8881 ext. 241

Jenny Robinson, Director of Advocacy (416) 962-8881 ext. 224 or (416) 522-6817