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Camping & Outdoor Education

**Camp Tapawingo
Outdoor Centre**
Tel: (416)961-8100

Women's Support Programs

**Breakthrough
Choices for Living**
Tel: (416)487-7151
**Teen Mothers
Family Support Centre
Early Intervention Children's Program**
Tel: (416) 266-1232

Housing & Shelter Programs

Humewood Drive Housing
Tel: (416)923-8454
Jessie's Non-Prof it Housing
Tel: (416) 360-1655
Pape Avenue Apartments
Tel: (416)469-0774
Stop 86
Tel: (416) 922-3271
Woodlawn Residence
Tel: (416) 923-8454
YWCA Women's Shelter
Tel: (416)693-7342

Employment & Skills Development

CAP (Career Assessment & Planning)
Tel: (416)487-7151
Career Assessment Centre
Tel: (416)751-1447
Employment Focus
Tel: (416)261-8496
**LEAP (Learn, Explore, Assess &
Prepare)**
Tel: (416)269-0090
Life Skills Training & Publications
Tel: (416)487-7151
Pre-Vocational Experience
Tel: (416)961-8100
**Scarborough South Community
Employment Centre**
Tel: (416)264-5788
Working Skills for Women
Tel: (416)964-3883
YWCA International Boutique
Tel: (416)924-4762

Charitable/Business Number
10822 9865 RR0001

Honourable John Baird
Minister of Community and Social Services
80 Grosvenor Street, 6th Floor
Hepburn Block, Queens Park
Toronto, On M7A 1E9

Fax 416-325-5221

November 28, 2001

Dear Minister Baird,

I am writing to you on behalf of the volunteers, parents, staff and children of the YWCA of Greater Toronto. We have been the business of serving women and their children since 1873. Last year we served over 32, 600 individuals in our four program areas of Women's Support Programs, Camping and Outdoor Education, Employment and Skills Development, and Housing and Shelter. There is not a single service we offer that doesn't require a woman to gain access to quality affordable childcare. Women remain the primary caregivers in our society, and women-headed households are the fastest growing in Canada. It is quite simply a basic pre-condition to women's participation in society, as well as a social responsibility for all of us as citizens to raise our children in the best care possible. We have noticed with amazement your proposal to cut \$200 million from regulated and affordable childcare in our community. To the staff, board, and clients of the YWCA of Greater Toronto, your proposals make no sense.

One in five women in Canada already live in poverty. Further, 41% of women are employed in the casual short-term where the median income is less than \$11,000 yearly. We believe that your vision will create a climate of skyrocketing fees, reduced subsidies and cuts to women's salaries. Very few quality childcare centres will be able to remain open or offer safe and accountable service in this climate. Child Care workers, most often women, will be faced with massive wage reductions and/or layoffs as their centres struggle to cut costs. Women's incomes are currently 61% of men's. Your proposed cuts to childcare will serve to exacerbate the gender gap in wages.

Working poor and fixed income families who require subsidized spots will lose access to regulated care and jeopardize their tenuous grasp on employability.

We can deduce that even full fee families will be faced with huge increases in fees in those few programs that may remain open. The vast majority will be left with no regulated childcare options.

The YWCA is aware, as an employer of predominantly women, that many businesses will see productivity decrease as employees are left without reliable childcare. As a provider of employment and job readiness programs, we are more aware than most of the barrier that lack of access to reliable childcare has on the workforce of Ontario.

The YWCA of Greater Toronto is part of a national Association of YWCA's across Canada, representing Canada's largest women's service organization. We are aware from our sister organizations across the country that childcare is an issue of great concern to all Canadians. You have set out a blueprint to destroy a network of high quality childcare that enriches our children's lives. Why set out to have Ontario lead the pack in decimating what little there is in our existing national patchwork of childcare services? Why not send a signal to the rest of the nation that the Ontario work force can focus on work, and stop worrying about home? Why not invest now in the next generation?

The YWCA of Greater Toronto would like your personal assurance that the child care budget is secure and that this plan is dead.

Sincerely,

Heather McGregor
Executive Director

c.c. Michael Bryant, MPP St. Paul's;
Liberal MPP Leona Dombrowsky (Children's Critic);
NDP MPP Shelley Martel (Children's Critic); Ontario
Coalition for Better Child Care