

Ministry of Education

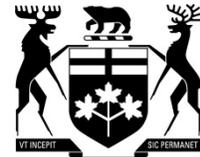
Minister

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Ministère de l'Éducation

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Ontario

May 9, 2016

Dear Members of the Early Years Advisory Committee,

As you know, the modernization of our child care and early years system is one of our top priorities. Together, we are working hard to build a system that is high-quality, seamless, and more accessible for Ontario's children and families. As you know, the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA)*, and the first phase of regulations came into force on August 31, 2015.

In 2015-16, the Ministry of Education embarked on the development of the second phase of new regulations under the CCEYA and a considerable consultation process in which we received valuable feedback from our partners and the public. Through the Ontario Regulatory Registry engagement, the ministry received over 1,300 submissions from municipalities, licensed child care providers, advocacy groups and professional associations, school boards, registered early childhood educators, parents and individuals.

As a result of these efforts, I am pleased to announce we have reached another important milestone with respect to our transformative work. On May 9, 2016, the ministry filed the phase two regulations under the CCEYA with the registrar of regulations and published these regulations on the e-Laws website.

Phase two regulations allow for the continued modernization and transformation of the early years and child care sector. Our engagement with you, as a member of the Early Years Advisory Committee, was invaluable to help inform the development and finalization of these regulations.

Through our engagement, we heard from you that there was broad support for those proposals that improve the quality of child care and update and strengthen health and safety requirements. We heard support for approaches to age groupings and ratios that increase flexibility while maintaining our strong commitment to quality programs that are safe and support child development. Further, many of you agreed with proposals regarding service system management and increasing access to authorized recreation and before and after school programs.

We also heard concerns about the impact the proposed age grouping and ratio proposals could have on program quality and access to spaces; the potential financial impact of a number of proposals such as increased requirements for qualified staff and enhanced sleep supervision provisions; as well as the need for further clarity in a number of areas.

The ministry listened to these concerns and has responded by developing a new approach that is reflective of the feedback we received. Some of the key changes include:

- a new **optional** approach to ratios and age groupings that we will develop, pilot and evaluate with our partners;
- removing the proposed requirement to have a staff person present where there are three or more babies under 18 months in a separate sleep/area room;
- permitting reduced ratios for children over 12 months and increasing time periods for reduced ratios at arrival and departure times; and
- including longer transition times for service system managers for the development of service plans.

To find out more about the new regulations and Ontario's plan for child care modernization please visit www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/.

To help support child care providers and Ontario's families during this transition period the ministry has developed a number of resources. Information and links to these resources will be shared through a memo to the sector that you will receive shortly.

These regulations will establish a new regulatory framework to support the CCEYA. In light of this approach, we will continue our valuable work as a group later this year. This collaboration is very important to me — and I look forward to our work together.

I would like to sincerely thank you for the important role you played in shaping the phase two regulations. The engagement, feedback and advice you provided through the Early Years Advisory Committee have been invaluable. You have informed our approach and I hope you see that reflected in this phase of regulations.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to Ontario's children and families. Your hard work is helping transform our child care and early years system into the very best in the world. And I am confident that our strong partnership is helping children across Ontario get the best possible start in life.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Sandals". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and "S".

Liz Sandals
Minister