



# Decent Work and Ontario's Early Childhood Workforce

**There's no going back.**

Alana Powell, RECE (she/her)

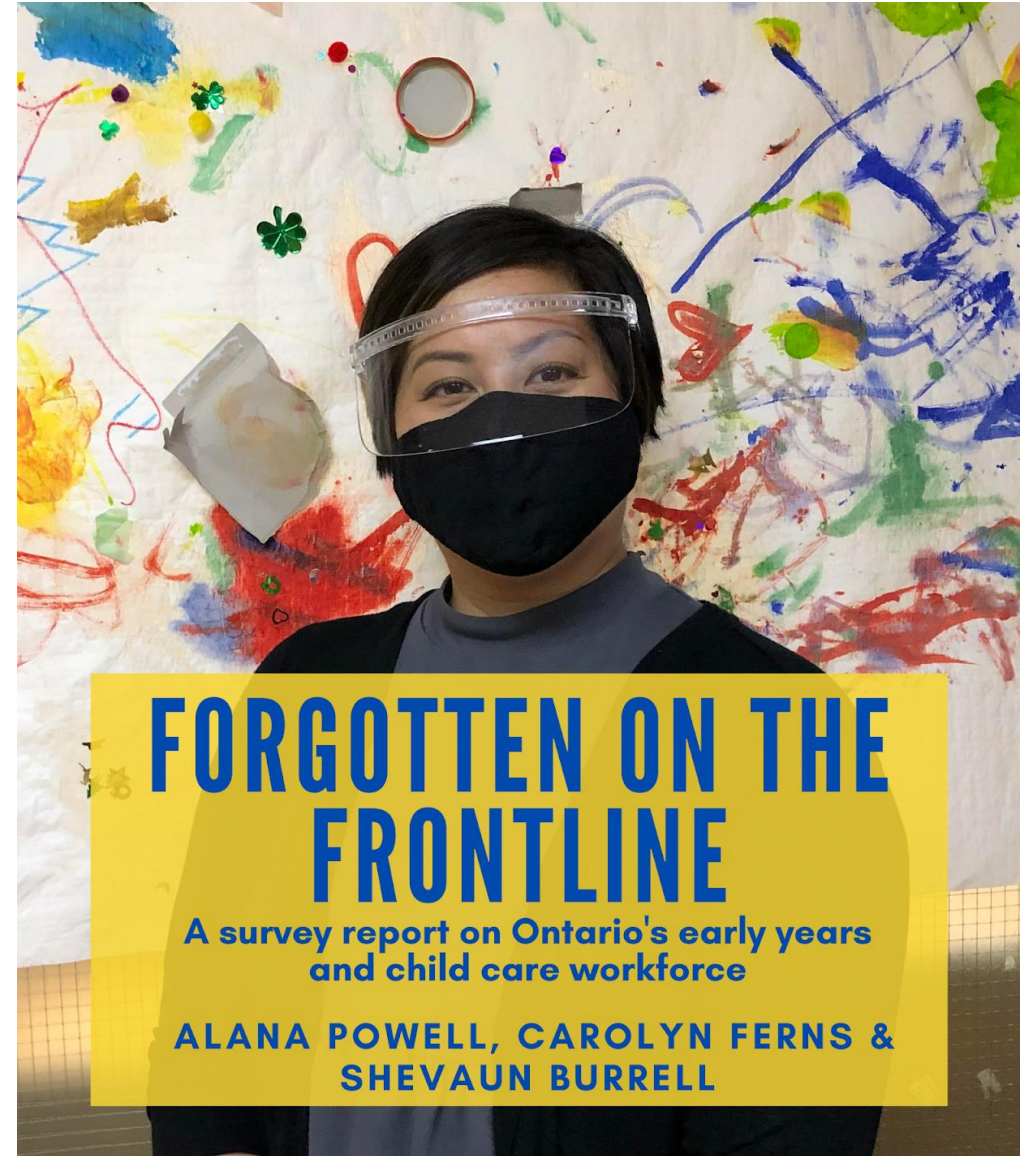
*Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario*

June 2, 2021

# Decent Work in Ontario

AECEO & OCBCC's survey heard from Early Childhood Educators and child care workers:

- **54%** reported decreased job satisfaction
- **89%** reported an increase in job-related stress.
- **43%** reported that they have considered leaving the sector since the onset of the pandemic
- **13%** were actively looking for opportunities outside the sector.
- **20%** have seen work hours increase, but of those only 9.3% reported an increase in wages.
- **36%** reported a decrease in planning time.



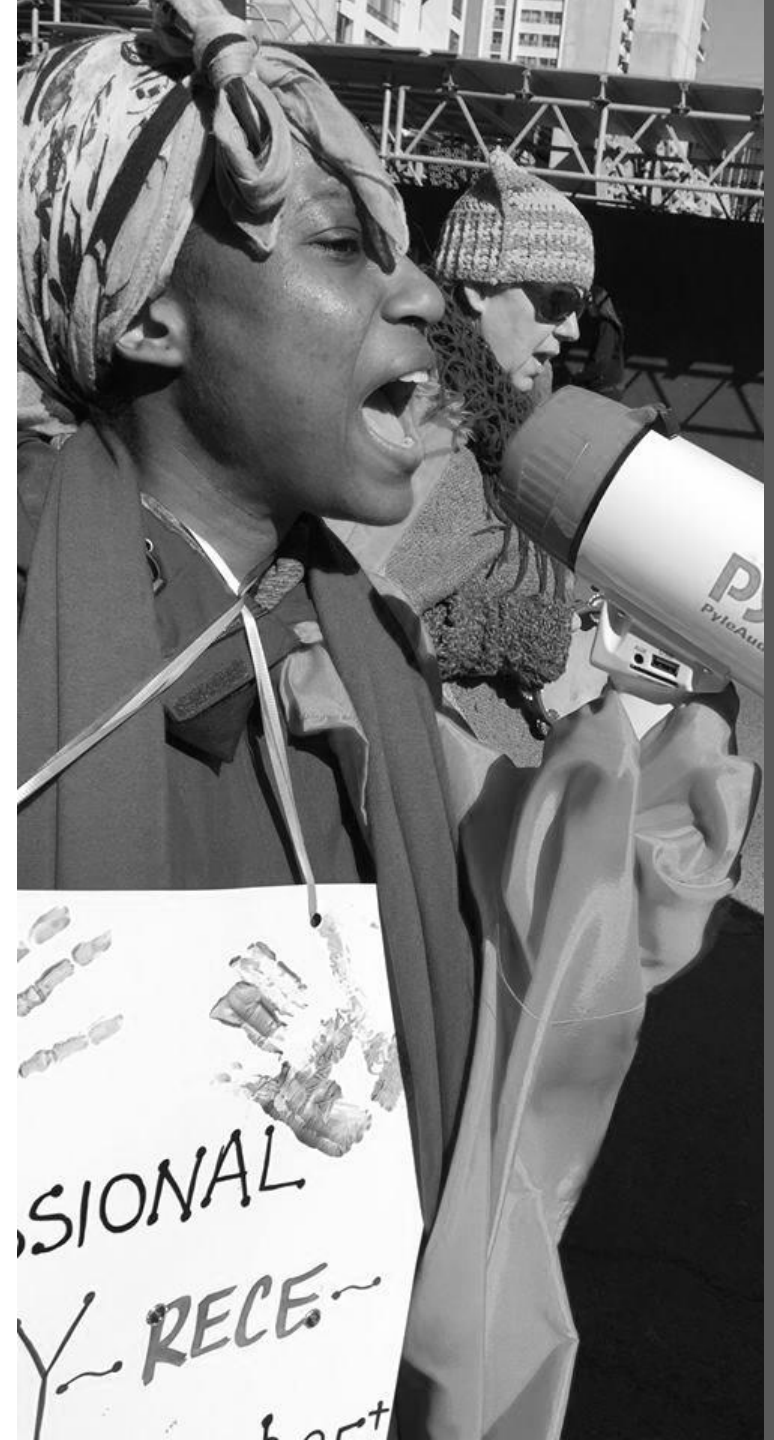
ONTARIO COALITION FOR  
*Better Child Care*



Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario

# Educators' Stories

- *“While trying to implement a high quality program, we are making sure our space is clean with many extra cleaning protocols, which **takes a lot of time away from the children.**”*
- *“High anxiety, high stress, faster approaching and more intense feelings of burnout, **more feelings of situational depression.**”*
- *“**We have no more planning time yet we were given more work to do** and I’m not just talking about increased cleaning and sanitizing....There is also no space to spend your unpaid lunch hour as only two people can be in the staff room, so **we are forced to sit in storage rooms on floors.**”*
- *My mental health and anxiety has increased a lot. **Crying on the job, overwhelmed with no support.**”*
- *“I was aware that I was committing myself to an underpaid and undervalued field, but it has never been more obvious than now. **My focus has shifted from quality education and experiences, to sanitization and cleaning.**”*
- *“I leave work every single day feeling exhausted, hopeless, **frustrated and emotional.**”*



# Entangled Problems

Market system perpetuates  
and entrenches inequities,  
individualism, technical  
approaches and  
efficiencies

Centering and  
dominance of  
colonialism, whiteness,  
developmentalism,  
neoliberalism



Care/education divide  
contributes to  
persistent devaluing  
of care and caring

Policy, funding,  
pedagogical  
path  
dependency



# What matters...

- ECEC isn't just about affordable/safe spaces for children while parents go to work
- ECEC is a place where educators, children, families and communities are living and being together – they are world-making places
- They are political and ethical spaces –
  - who is included?
  - who is able to live well?
  - how do we respond, engage, care for one another?
  - what does our pedagogy do/create?

# A Path-Breaking Plan for Ontario Child Care

## The Challenge

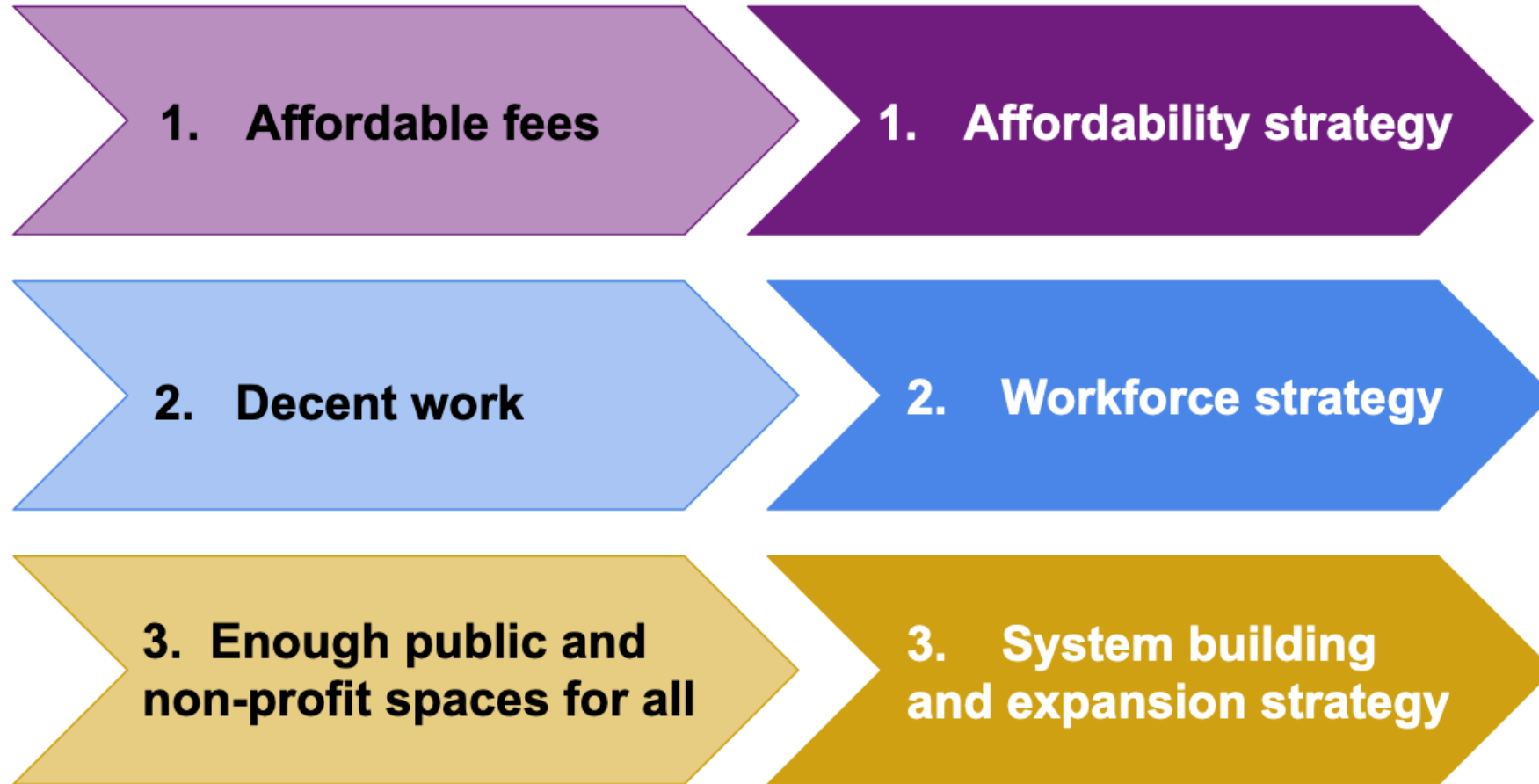
- Decades of reliance on our current market-based arrangements and path dependencies could lead our governments to only tinker around the edges rather than make big changes.

## The Opportunity – There is no going back!

- Federal funding could more than double Ontario's current child care budget and aims to publicly fund services directly.
- The federal plan opens up possibilities to reimagine and meet the 3 big ideas:
  - Affordable fees;
  - Decent work;
  - Enough public and non-profit spaces for all.



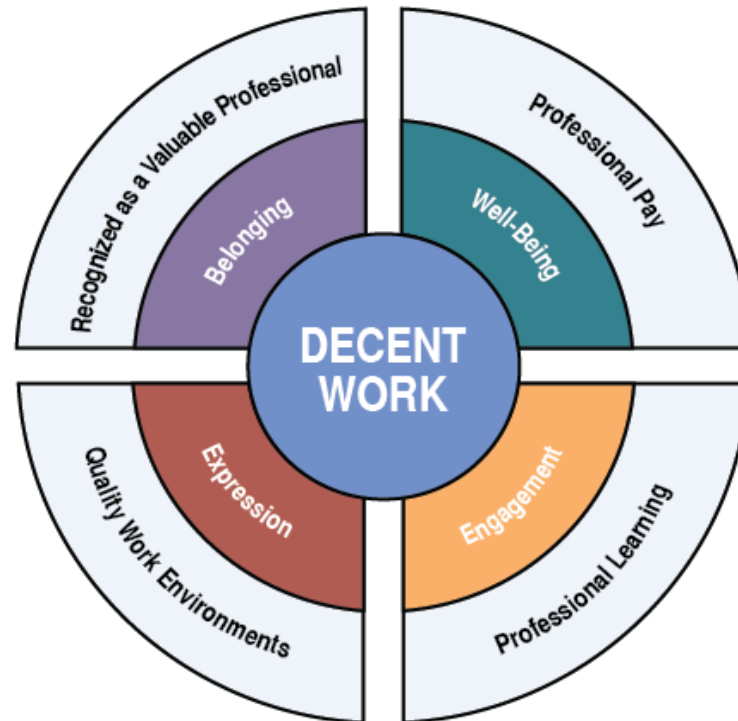
# A Path-Breaking Plan: Putting the 3 Big Ideas for Child Care into action



# Ontario Early Childhood Sector Decent Work Charter

## **Belonging**

Recognition of staff as valued professionals



## **Well Being**

Professional Pay & Compensation

## **Engagement**

Professional Learning

## **Expression**

Quality work environments





## 2. Decent work

## 2. Workforce strategy

- Implement a **wage grid** that ensures a **\$25 per hour** starting wage, with commensurate compensation package
- Develop and establish **Decent Work Standards** to support pedagogical practice. Decent Work Standards should align with the AECEO's Decent Work Charter and include:
  - the provision of daily, collaborative, on-site paid planning time
  - permanent paid sick and emergency leave days;
  - engagement in communities of practice;
  - paid time for professional learning;
  - an Early Childhood Workforce Learning Framework that ensures meaningful professional learning opportunities, mandates Anti-Racism training, commits to Truth and Reconciliation, and enhances pathways to acquiring and upgrading qualifications.
- Form a standing **Advisory Committee** that is representative of the ECEC workforce, including Black, First Nation, Metis, Inuit and Racialized educators, to coordinate and inform policy development.

# PROVINCIAL ADVOCACY TIMELINE



# Get Involved!

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Join us for our webinar:

*“Next Steps for Child Care Advocacy  
in Ontario”*

June 15<sup>th</sup>, 7pm

- Introducing the Path-Breaking Plan for Ontario Child Care
- Sharing our new Toolkit for Action
- Highlighting local advocacy initiatives and inspiring new action.

