

November 16 , 2020

Regulatory Registry Feedback
c/o Early Years and Child Care Division
Ministry of Education
315 Front Street West, 11th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 0B8

Via email: CCEYA_consultation@ontario.ca

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Proposed Regulatory Amendments under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is the largest general farm organization in Ontario, proudly representing more than 38,000 farm family members across the province. OFA has a strong voice for our members and the agri-food industry on issues, legislation and regulations governed by all levels of government. We are passionate and dedicated to ensuring the agri-food sector and our rural communities are included, consulted and considered in any new and changing legislation that impacts the sustainability and growth of our farm businesses.

Ontario's diverse and innovative agri-food sector is a powerhouse for the province – growing and producing more than 200 farm and food products, fuelling our rural communities and driving the provincial economy by generating more than 860,000 jobs and contributing over \$47 billion to Ontario's annual GDP. We are the leading agricultural advocate for Ontario farmers, their businesses and their communities.

OFA is committed to the need for accessible, affordable, high quality child care in rural areas across the Province. Rural areas face real challenges to providing early learning and child care programs. The challenges faced by the agricultural sector in these areas are even greater.

The proposed regulatory amendments under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* focus on the following key areas:

1. Flexibility and responsiveness: Supporting licensees and child care providers in being able to meet the needs of their local communities and to help increase the number of child care programs/spaces available to Ontario's families;
2. Qualification requirements: Updating several qualification requirements to support workforce retention and address long-standing staffing challenges;
3. Administrative/regulatory burden: Removing duplicative, onerous, and unnecessary requirements for licensees and providers;
4. Health and safety: Supporting the health, safety, and well-being of children;
5. Regulations requiring clarification of intent: Providing clarification to foster consistent interpretation of requirements across the sector; and
6. Technical: Changes in language, updating references, revoking transitional regulatory provisions

OFA is in favour of the proposed amendments outlined in this consultation. While there remains room for improving access to affordable, high quality child care to meet the unique needs of farm families, these proposed changes appear to add to the flexibility of provision of child care while maintaining quality and safety oversights.

OFA is in favour of these changes, while encouraging the Ministry to continue looking at approaches to offering accessible, affordable, high quality child care that can meet the needs of farm families.

I trust our opinions and recommendations will be given due consideration in this consultation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Currie', written in a cursive style.

Keith Currie
President

cc: OFA Board of Directors