



ONTARIO AUTISM COALITION

c/o Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP, 199 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5L 1A9, (647) 496-4688
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday November 3, 2022

OAC Supports Education Workers Their working conditions are our children's learning conditions

The Ontario Autism Coalition, which advocates for the over fifty thousand autistic children on the waitlist of the Ford Government's Ontario Autism Program (OAP), confirms it supports education workers across Ontario who are fighting for better working conditions and compensation.

Education workers, particularly those who work with autistic children to keep them safe and in the classroom, have extremely demanding working conditions and have never been compensated adequately. Their working conditions are our children's learning conditions.

In 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down a [pivotal decision](#) on disability rights, affirming that students with disabilities are entitled to receive the accommodations they need to access and benefit from the service of public education. By not ensuring education workers are supported and available, the Ford Government is violating the rights of autistic children.

The OAC supports safe and accessible schools for *all* children. For Ontario schools to meet those criteria they need to be adequately staffed by education workers. We are deeply concerned that Ontario schools are becoming less accessible and safe for our children as the education worker role becomes a less desirable career path due to a combination of demanding working conditions and poor compensation. The OAC sees this as the further decimation of our community's critical support systems by the Ford government.

Read the [Open letter to education minister Lecce demanding fair resolution and wages for education workers](#)

—30—

For Further Information Contact:

Angela Brandt, President, (647) 496-4688

Kate Dudley-Logue, Vice-President Outreach, (613) 882-5285

Tony Stravato, Director, (905) 441-0611

#50KIsNotOK

The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.
www.ontarioautismcoalition.com



ONTARIO AUTISM COALITION

c/o Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP, 199 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5L 1A9, (647) 496-4688

November 3rd, 2022

An open letter to education minister Lecce demanding fair resolution and wages for education workers.

The Ontario Autism Coalition Supports Education Workers

Successive governments have chronically undervalued our children and education workers who support them. Education workers, particularly those who work with our children to keep them safe and in the classroom, have extremely demanding working conditions and have never been compensated adequately. As such, the Ontario Autism Coalition (OAC) publicly supports education workers across Ontario who are fighting for better working conditions and compensation. Their working conditions are our children's learning conditions.

The OAC supports safe and accessible schools for ALL children. For schools to meet those requirements they need to be adequately staffed by well trained, professional education workers, who are fairly compensated to ensure retention and continuity in the classroom. Ontario schools are becoming less accessible and safe for our children as the education worker sector becomes a less desirable career path due to a combination of demanding working conditions and poor compensation. The OAC sees this as the further decimation of our community's critical support systems by the Ford government.

A generation of autistic children has already suffered over four years due to poor leadership by the Ford government. Our children have languished on waitlists, not receiving the supports and services they require to thrive. With many of our children entering the school system unprepared due to a lack of services/therapies, we need education workers more than ever, yet we see fewer of them. In a time where diversity, equity, and inclusion have become a priority, the lack of qualified education workers means exclusion for many Autistic children. Education workers are a vital part of the ecosystem our children require for inclusion and success.

Education workers are the reason our children can physically be included in the classroom.

“Failing to provide enough education workers is akin to ripping the wheelchair ramps from the fronts of our schools. These people are that essential to our children. —Kerry Monaghan, OAC VP

A government cannot claim that they care about diversity, equity, and inclusion if they don't support the workers & environments that allow *all* children to have meaningful, and safe, school participation. On November 9, 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada handed down a pivotal decision on disability rights, affirming that students with disabilities are entitled to receive the accommodations they need to access and benefit from the service of public education (*Moore v. British Columbia (Education)*, 2012). By not ensuring education workers are supported and available, Doug Ford is ignoring this commitment.

Doug Ford says he's for the "little guy," just not our "little guys."

Signed in solidarity,

The Ontario Autism Coalition

#50KIsNotOK

The Ontario Autism Coalition is a non-profit Ontario corporation dedicated to advocacy and political action on behalf of people with autism.
www.ontarioautismcoalition.com