
Voice of the Family

Heartfelt messages of
gratitude, hopefulness and
confidence.





WHO WE ARE

The Licensed Child Care Network is a group of early learning and licensed child care organizations dedicated to high-quality child care.

We work collaboratively with the community to raise public awareness about the importance of early learning and licensed child care.

Our vision is a community that understands, promotes and champions early learning and child care.

We work to achieve this through education, family and community engagement, advocacy, and collaboration.

www.lccn.ca

WE ASKED FAMILIES...

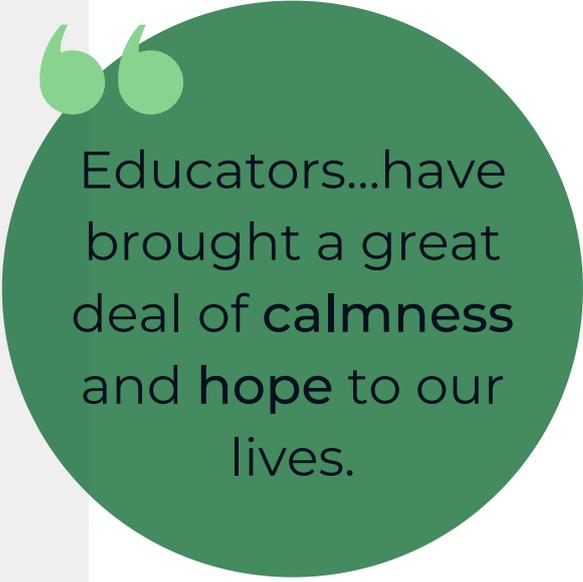
What has child
care meant to you
during the
pandemic?

We are delighted to share a handful of London and Middlesex family letters with you.

These stories provide insights into how families are navigating and responding to the challenges of the pandemic while balancing work and the responsibility of raising young children.



I currently have a preschooler who attends a child care centre in London. I have long thought of the staff and educators at the centre as an extension of our family, but this became even more pronounced over the past year. During the initial centre closures last spring, staff took the time to continue doing what they do best - connect with the kids. They quickly found ways to connect the educators with the kids and the kids with each other. When we returned to the centre in the fall, it was like we didn't miss a beat. Even though the world had changed on the outside, the educators have worked tirelessly to ensure that, on the grounds of our centre, everything was 'normal'.



Educators...have brought a great deal of calmness and hope to our lives.

My son has continually been greeted at the door with smiling eyes, a joke, a race, a high-five. If, at the end of the day, my son forgot to pack up a special drawing, the educator would take the time to walk him all the way back to his classroom so he can bring it home, without ever rushing him. Any updates I am provided focus on the little joys in the day - how much the kids giggled when playing hide and seek, that my son can recognize the letters in his name, that the kids designed a car race track out of paper towel tubes.

Never once have I heard any of the staff complain about the masks, face shields, extra cleaning, or changes in processes. They've taken all of the changes in this industry in stride and have brought a great deal of calmness and hope to our lives.

Their focus has not wavered from the safety and development of the kids over the last year and I am amazed at their adaptability and fortitude. Knowing that I have a reliable, safe, and fun place to send my son every day is something that I took for granted pre-COVID, but is something I feel is a massive privilege now. The empathy, creativity, kindness, and relatability of this group of individuals is what elevates my family from simply child care consumers to a member of this child care centre's family.

Lindsey Declerq
Preschooler, 3.7 years



As a family of essential service workers, my wife and I rely on the availability of child care services. Our collective concern, when leaving for work each day, is the physical, emotional and social well-being of our three children. If we are confident these minimum needs are met, we can re-allocate our concentration to the worthwhile work we do in our community.

We firmly believe that quality child care benefits everyone—families, employers, businesses, and, most importantly, our children. My wife and I are fortunate and thankful for the professional and capable staff of our child care organization in London. Our children enjoy a safe, fun and learning environment because of their laudable and dedicated staff. Without this service functioning during the Covid-19 pandemic, my family would be adversely affected.

David Younan & Dagmara Wozniak
Toddler, 2.1 years,
Infant, enrolling for January 2022

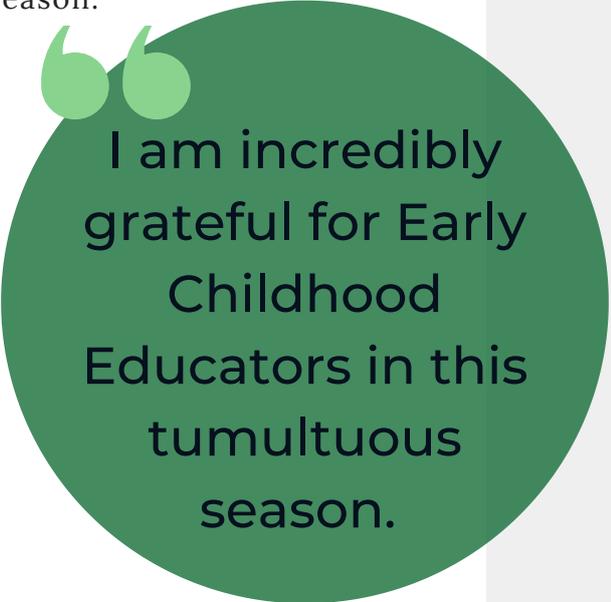
To say that we are grateful for childcare centres remaining open in the last year would be an understatement. I believe that "the years before five last the rest of their lives" and that the quality of care my daughter receives now will impact the rest of her life. Our daughter has thrived at child care centre in London and it is a direct reflection of the care Early Childhood Educators pour into her and the other children at the centre. The ECEs nurture, encourage, educate, protect and expand horizons. The opportunity for our daughter to interact with other children in a caring and safe environment has resulted in a courageous, kind and confident toddler. I am incredibly grateful for ECEs in this tumultuous season.

Childcare centres have also ensured our children receive quality care from parents. Parents who have been stretched beyond their capacity in this season of lockdowns are able to focus on work during the day because of the childcare made available. This frees them up to provide quality care to their children outside of work hours--rather than being beyond their limits at all hours of the day as they try to juggle work and childcare.

Stressed parents do not make good parents. Easing the burden on parents sets all children up for a better future.

In short, we love our ECEs and we are so grateful that childcare has remained open.

Petra Koman
Infant, 1 year



I am incredibly grateful for Early Childhood Educators in this tumultuous season.



As someone who works to end gender-based violence and support survivors, I can't emphasize enough that universal affordable childcare is one of the pieces to ensuring an end to gender-based violence. Women's independence and freedom from violence is tied to their ability to work, to manage their own finances. As we've seen amplified during the pandemic, women bear the brunt of childcare responsibilities. By providing affordable childcare we can ensure that women can work and leave the home, all while being assured their children are somewhere where they are safe and can thrive. Licensed childcare centres also have the important role of promoting healthy relationships and early learnings around consent, supporting an end to gender-based violence in the next generation. This is made so true for me personally as I've seen my toddler Remy thrive at his licensed child care centre in London Ontario. However, like so many other families, the financial cost of providing this excellent care has been a strain on our family. **Universal affordable childcare would be life changing for us, would be life changing for the thousands of survivors of gender-based violence, and would help to ensure we can have a future for our children that is free from this violence.**

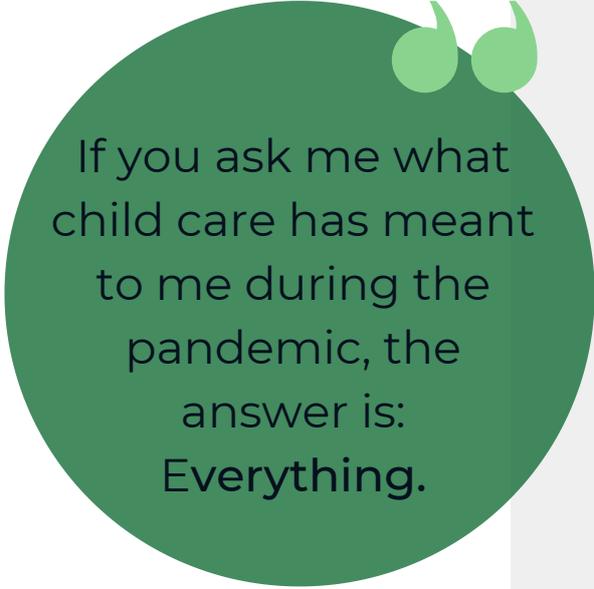
Dr. AnnaLise Trudell, Manager of Education, Training and Research at Anova
Toddler, 2 years

When I think of my children's child care centre, the word that comes to mind is comfort. I went back to work relatively early after both my children were born; drawn back to the organized chaos that helped round out my feelings of purpose. It wasn't an easy choice, but I knew it was what I needed - and I have always been so grateful for the warm memories of handing off my tiny bundles into caring hands. My daughter is now in school and my son now in his last year of preschool - yet these feelings of comfort remain. Indeed it was precisely because I take such comfort in the educators who care for my son that I felt completely blindsided by the original closure of child care in the province.

I went from someone who was able to balance motherhood with a busy and demanding career to a shell of myself. And I wasn't alone. My son, so attached to his caregivers who have loved and cared for him frankly more often than myself, developed a severe stutter. Our routine became chaos. My work suffered. My identity suffered. I don't pretend to hold some powerful position that changes the world - but my impact to my surroundings, my clients, the economy, was dashed. I, like thousands of other women, tried to make it work, but it would be a total lie to say that we left that period unscathed.

The reopening of child care last summer was palpable in my life. It gave true meaning to "you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." I always took comfort in my son's educators, but this pandemic has highlighted that in loving and caring for him, they are indirectly loving and caring for me. They are the reason - the main reason in fact - that I am able to keep my career. Excel in the job I love. Escape depression. Feel like myself. I am so grateful for these educators who have chosen this career so that I, in turn, can choose mine. Throughout this pandemic I have often felt that the importance of childcare hasn't been highlighted to the level it should be - it can get lost in the jokes about surviving chaos, internet memes, and the fact that yes, parents are technically still standing (but barely).

I cannot stress enough how scary it was to see that glimpse of what my life would be if I didn't have somewhere safe to take my son. And it was for those very reasons that I did not hesitate for a second to send him back when the doors reopened. The diligence and concern that the educators demonstrate on a daily basis was already well known to me - and the success of my son's return since last summer is evidence that these caregivers are beyond essential. They are diligent. They have given up so much. They have put my son's safety first - every time. My son remains safe, cared for and loved. So if you ask me what childcare has meant to me during the pandemic, the answer is: everything.



If you ask me what
child care has meant
to me during the
pandemic, the
answer is:
Everything.

Beth Mullin

Preschooler, 4.0 years



My name is Courtney McQueen. My son Sam, has attended a child care centre in London since they opened. There are not enough words I can put into this short message to express my gratitude for the Director and the Educators that work there, and how they have shaped my son over the past year and a half.

Every day he learns something new. His days are fun, imaginative and educational. The time and effort the educators put into every work day is beyond amazing. Sam has excelled in all aspects of his development and mostly due to the child care centre.

I am a Nurse Practitioner, and have had to be at my clinic throughout the entire pandemic seeing patients. When all child care centres had to shut down at the beginning of the pandemic, it was devastating trying to find the quality of care that we were used to. Now that child care can remain open, **I continue to go to work every day with one less worry about how my child will be taken care of while I'm away.**

The educators deserve all the praise and I can't thank them enough. On a side note, I hope that you push to Premier Ford for these educators to be vaccinated as soon as possible, considering they are quite essential, allowing the rest of us to do our own jobs. Thank you.

Courtney McQueen
Toddler, 2 years

This letter is to express my sincere gratitude for Child Care Centres, especially during this challenging past year. I had the unique challenge of returning to work from maternity leave at the start of the pandemic (March 2020). Returning to work after a leave of absence always brings with it a bit of uncertainty, but this was heightened with the closure of Child Care Centres during that time. I had to navigate how to be a full-time employee, while also continuing to be a full-time mom to my 12-month-old. Those were truly some of the darkest, hardest days for me mentally and I became one of the 1/3 of women in Canada who considered leaving the workforce so I could adequately care for my child.

When Child Care Centres opened, and I had the opportunity to enroll my child in Child Care London. I was elated. At first, he started in a part time spot and I could immediately see the impact that his attendance had on his development as well as how it positively affected my mental health. I was able to be a better, more committed employee during work hours and a more committed mom when he was at home. My once shy and scared son was quickly developing into a friendly, social, chatty toddler in just a matter of a few weeks, all thanks to the amazing team of Educators. Realizing this, I could not wait to enroll him in a full-time spot.

He has now been enrolled full-time since November and is absolutely flourishing. I have been able to see firsthand how much a child develops in these early years and how important age-appropriate learning & sensory play can be for their development. My child is thriving because of the work and partnership of our Child Care Centre. Subsequently, I can dedicate and focus my time to being a great employee while he is in their care. Having a safe place to bring my child every day truly saved my career this year. I would not have been able to remain in the workforce if Child Care Centres had remained closed or were to close once again.

I truly understand and believe in the importance Child Care and Early Childhood Educators play in the development of our tiny humans. The entire staff goes above and beyond to create a nurturing, safe and fun environment each and every day for the children in attendance. They truly are unsung heroes and I, along with many other parents, likely couldn't do it without them. Pandemic or no pandemic, Child Care Centres are so important in our children's lives.

Linda McDougall
Infant, 1.1 years



Having a safe place to bring my child every day truly saved my career this year.



I want to share that our child care centre, as a part of our family, has been, and continues to be invaluable, particularly during the past year.

We are a family of two registered healthcare professionals and having the support of licensed child care throughout the pandemic has helped our family worry less knowing that trained Educators are prioritizing our children and their health and development. **Exceptional Early Childhood Education is critical for establishing a foundation for a bright and flourishing future.** We are so proud and thankful for all of the incredible, caring, and dedicated Educators who are helping raise our sons.

Sincerely,
Micah and Larissa Church
Preschooler, 3 years

Hello, my name is Zoie Fontana, my son Teddie is a student at a child care centre in London, Ontario. I cannot say enough amazing things about the centre and the entire organization. The past year has been a struggle for so many families as we all navigate our way through this pandemic. The fact that childcare has remained open has had such a huge impact for Teddie and our family. If childcare had closed my husband or I would have likely had to step back from our job as caring for a toddler at home requires full time attention. We have felt so safe sending Teddie to child care throughout this entire pandemic. The screening and level of detail they put into keeping all the children safe has been amazing.



Keeping our
childcare centres
open has made
an enormous
difference, thank
you.

There hasn't been one positive case at his centre, which is so amazing, and a direct impact to the level of care the centre is putting into screening, educating parents and cleaning. None of this has been taken lightly and families know how important it is to ensure kids are only being sent who are healthy. The centre has been there for all the families every step of the way, answering countless questions, sending out regular communication and mostly importantly keeping us all safe.

Aside from the fact that both my husband and I were able to stay in the workforce, the impact to Teddie's development has been amazing. He has learned SO much, the social skills he has learned from being at child care are amazing and something I am so grateful he did not miss out on. Thank you for keeping our childcare centres open - it has made an enormous difference in our son's development and allowed us to keep some normalcy during this crazy time, thank you.

Sincerely, Zoie Fontana
Toddler, 1.8 years



With me being a Police Officer and my wife a Nurse Practitioner, having the child care centres remain open has been a blessing.

We do not have the opportunity to strictly work from home and being able to leave our children with professional child care workers has relieved a lot of stress. With the pandemic and lockdown measures, leaving children with family/friends/ or babysitters is just not a viable option.

We are further grateful for the emergency school-aged child care that has been provided to us by the government. We have seen our school-aged son Lucas continue to grow, remain social with other children, and learn by being given the opportunity to attend a child care centre program.

Childcare centre's remaining open, and providing such quality care, has truly been a life saver! Thank you!

Brad Lobsinger
Emergency Child Care Program, 4 years

