



January 5, 2021

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VIA EMAIL: stephen.lecce@pc.ola.org

The Honorable Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2K8

Re: Sexual Abuse Prevention Program

We are writing on behalf of the Ontario School Board Council of Unions - CUPE Ontario, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, OPSEU 2100, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) to share our perspectives on the Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (SAPP) the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE) is looking to introduce in 2022.

As educators, the safety of the students we serve is paramount, which is why we wholeheartedly support the purpose of this training. There is no question that sexual abuse prevention training is valuable, necessary, and should be part of all post-secondary Early Childhood Education programs.

As the CECE plans for its implementation of the SAPP, we ask that:

- consideration be given to the deadline for completion. We are still in a global pandemic that continues to present challenges that impact our early childhood educators' work environments and their mental health;
- accommodations and supports be provided to members for whom the training may be traumatizing or re-traumatizing;
- those who themselves are victims of sexual abuse and for whom the training may be traumatizing or re-traumatizing receive support through the CECE.
- a plan be put in place for early childhood educators who may be on leave and unavailable during the window for completion;

- those who require medical accommodation to complete this new requirement receive the support they need; and
- collaboration continue with unions representing early childhood educators in school boards to ensure the successful implementation of the SAPP.

Of the Ministry of Education, we ask that:

- school boards be directed to provide time during the instructional day to complete the training (as per the established practice for mandatory health and safety training); and
- a Professional Activity (PA) Day be allocated to complete the SAPP in the fall of 2022 for all designated early childhood educators employed by school boards, including occasional designated early childhood educators.

This collective approach to professional learning will allow individuals to discuss and reflect on the content of the program together. Having the support of colleagues throughout the program is critical, especially for those who may be negatively affected, traumatized, or re-traumatized by the program.

We care deeply about the safety and well-being of students, and, as always, we will do what is necessary to safeguard their physical and mental health, and well-being. We urge you to consider the aforementioned requests as you develop your SAPP implementation plan. We look forward to working with you to ensure the program is effective in protecting students from sexual abuse.

Sincerely,

Karen Brown, President
Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

Melody Hurtubise, President (Acting)
OPSEU 2100 - Peel

Karen Littlewood, President
Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation

Sheila Olan-MacLean, President
Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care

Laura Walton, President
Ontario School Board Council of Unions – CUPE Ontario

Copy: Kristine Parsons, Chair, College of Early Childhood Educators
Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister of Education