

PART 4 – KINDERGARTEN CREDIT

This section is short because it is powerful in its simplicity. **Kindergarten Credit** puts resources directly into the hands of parents so they can continue to make childcare and education choices that are in the best interests of their families. There is no need for lengthy explanations because parents know what to do – already, and every day, they care for and educate their own children.

Program Delivery:

While there are many mechanisms for program delivery, 3 potential ones are:

- Give families the funds and tax them in the lower income earner's hands;
- Give families the funds and tax them based on family income as is done with the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) **or**
- Give all Kindergarten kids a universal voucher.

Whichever model is used, families would simply check off a box when they register for Kindergarten, indicating that year which they wanted to do: send their child to all-day Kindergarten or to just half-day with the accompanying Kindergarten Credit.

Predictable Objections:

The litany of predictable objections that vested interests will have is too long to list – we will counter them as they inevitably come up. There are however four that I will briefly address now:

1. That Kindergarten Credit will introduce 'choice'.

We are told by the educational machinery that **choice** is bad because it will diminish the 'public good' of having children in every neighbourhood 'meld together' as one. Because Ontario already has two distinct publicly funded school systems, Public and Separate (Catholic), in which neighbourhood children can attend completely different schools – based upon religion no less – this 'social cohesion' argument is rendered a moot point in our province.

2. That giving money directly to parents 'privatizes' education.

While this 'privatizing' objection has always been a meaningless one, again we have an established principle of respecting and allowing parents to use tax dollars for the care and education of their children as they see fit. This principle is embedded in the Canada Child Tax Benefit which close to 85% of Canadian families receive. This 'untied' voucher is acknowledged to be one of the most successful family programs we have in this country. And, it is one that trusts parents.

3. That parents will spend their money on 'beer and popcorn'.

Addressed in the preceding point.

4. That Kindergarten Credit would dismantle ‘early learning programs’ in our province.

As a former grade one teacher and a person who has seen first hand the life-changing transformation that occurs when parents are empowered to be their child’s true ‘first agent’, this objection is the one I would most like to take on.

Aside from the fact that ‘all-day learning’ has not even been ‘built’, meaning there is nothing to dismantle, it is actually the Pascal-McGuinty plan that would destroy the thriving, abundant and diverse care and early education choices that parents currently enjoy and have access to.

And I would challenge any of these vested interests – whether they be teacher union bosses, bureaucrats, politicians or ‘childcare experts’ – to stand before me or any mother, father or grandparent in this province and tell us that they can do a better job of educating our children than we can.