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For Immediate Release

No Plan in Place for P.E.I.'s Early Learning Sector

The Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) is asking government to begin its comprehensive review of early learning in Prince Edward Island. The introduction of full day school-based kindergarten in September 2010 will have a significant effect on the early childhood sector in P.E.I., and as stated in the Commissioner's Report on Public Kindergarten, "measures may be needed to avoid the loss of too many early childhood centres in the province."

The President of the Union of Public Sector Employees, Shelley Ward, said that "the Commissioner's report identifies the impacts on early childhood educators but makes few recommendations to avert these impacts. The early childhood sector will lose over \$5 million dollars in revenues in 2010 and over a third of their staff. Many centres will be forced to shut down."

"In effect, the Commissioner's Report on Public Kindergarten points out the serious consequences of introducing school-based kindergarten without having a plan in place to protect the vital early childhood education sector in Prince Edward Island," explained Ward.

Ward stated that "the Early Childhood Development Association (ECDA) had originally asked government to review the early learning sector when it was first decided to review the kindergarten system in P.E.I. Not surprisingly, at this much later date, we find the Commissioner recommending the very same thing. The difference is that the early childhood sector now finds its back up against the wall."

"The government must ensure that the Commissioner's recommendation is carried out promptly. Premier Ghiz has also assured Islanders that there will be more investments in early childhood education and a possibility of providing funding to keep early childhood centres open. The care and education of our most precious resource and the livelihoods of our educators and business owners depend on it," concluded Ward.

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