

## **Childcare spaces still unavailable in Beaches-East York**

By Maria Minna, MP

Over the last year, I have met thousands of my constituents, whether it be knocking on their doors or them coming into my office on Danforth Avenue. One of the most widely-heard concerns by myself and my office is the extreme lack of childcare spaces in our community.

I remember meeting a single mother with three children. She was lucky that she was able to find childcare spaces, but it was costing her upwards of \$1,200 per month. Others are not fortunate to afford that, and there are others that simply cannot find spaces for their children.

In another case, the family had to put their children into separate childcare facilities due to the lack of spaces. This was after spending months on waiting lists.

We hear these concerns regularly in our constituency office along with many other issues members in our community are having with this current Conservative government. We recently had a case where a single mother lost her job because she simply could not get a childcare space. Others are either forced to stay home or take part-time jobs that would not even put a dent in the real cost of childcare.

In our community of Beaches-East York, the Enderby Childcare facility was opened in the last year and already faces a waiting list of over two hundred children.

These waiting lists are unacceptable. This is why the previous Liberal government made agreements with all provinces and territories for a truly national Early Learning and Childcare program. The entire allotment of \$5 billion would be in our communities right now if the Conservatives had not cancelled those agreements. Toronto alone would have 3,500 new quality, affordable childcare spaces.

The net \$50 per month that the Conservatives say is “childcare” does not even pay for a week of childcare, let alone a month! Parents in our community have told me how much those spaces are needed. I fought for those spaces since my first election in 1993 and I will not sit idly by as Stephen Harper erases all the work that I put into this initiative.

The Early Learning and Childcare program was about more than just opening more spaces. It was about giving our children the best start possible in life. The money was also to go towards training more teachers and raising their salaries. The people taking care of our children deserve more than the minimum wage.

The people of Beaches-East York have voiced their concerns and I have heard them. I will continue my fight to reinstate the Early Learning and Childcare agreements and deliver those spaces to the citizens of our great community.