

chatr
MOBILE

NATION-WIDE TALK, TEXT AND DATA

4GB OF DATA

FOR ONLY

\$40/MO.

NO OVERTIME CHARGES

LET'S GET GOING
CHATRMOBILE.COM

VISIT OUR LOCATION TODAY!

1355 Kingston Road, Unit 21 Pickering ON (905)-856-2688 (Lower level in foodcourt area)

4300 Steeles Ave East, Unit D56 Markham ON (905)-604-7828

6464 Yonge Street, Unit 179 Toronto ON (416)-730-0393 (Close to the center of the mall)

chatr
AUTHORIZED DEALER

Get up to 2GB's of bonus data on the Data, Talk and Text Plans available for a limited time, subject to change without notice. Once you reach your 3G speed data allotment, your data speed will be reduced until your next anniversary date. Only applicable to new activations. Taxes extra. TM Trademarks used under license ©2018

GOVERNMENT "REFORMS" WILL LEAVE FAMILIES AFFECTED BY AUTISM ON THEIR OWN AND STRUGGLING FOR SUPPORT

Government "reforms" will leave families affected by autism on their own and struggling for support - CUPE joined by Ontario Autism Coalition in condemning decision that divides children with autism into "haves" and "have nots" -

The Ford government's reckless changes to the way it supports children with autism put desperately needed services at risk and make it clear to their families that they're on their own, say representatives of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and CUPE Ontario.

Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) (CNW Group/Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE))

They are joined in this assessment by the Ontario Autism Coalition, which has shared its concerns with

the union.

"The government hasn't listened to frontline workers and it hasn't listened to parents of children with autism," said Laura Walton, an educational assistant (EA) and president of CUPE's Ontario School Board Council of Unions (OSBCU). The council represents 55,000 education workers, including educational assistants trained in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to work with children with autism.

"These changes are a body blow to inclusion for children with autism and to a parent's right to educate their child in the public education system."

Walton described wait lists and lack of supports for children with autism as "a scandal", but warned, "This move does nothing to train more educational assistants in ABA thera-

py. It doesn't promote inclusion in classrooms for children with autism. It doesn't provide more educational assistants, it doesn't increase services in rural and northern areas, and we're back to funding support based on age.

"This is not the change we need." CUPE has called for a system of regional, publicly run centres to assess children with autism; needs-based funding for services for children with exceptionalities; and a high-quality, inclusive and supportive public education for all children.

"That way children with special needs, including those with autism, can enroll in the local school in their community, where they and their parents can get everything they need in terms of support from qualified EAs and from specialists such as speech-language pathologists,

psychologists, behavioural therapists, and child and youth workers," said Walton.

This vision was championed in part by the Ontario Autism Coalition, which voiced its fears about the new limitations that Ford government is putting on services to children with autism.

"We are concerned about equitable access to high-quality services," said Laura Kirby-McIntosh, President of the Ontario Autism Coalition. "Currently, some of these services are offered through some of school boards via EAs and other frontline staff.

"We are concerned that this will limit access to supports that parents need in rural and francophone areas - this will lead to a lower level of supports than families are currently receiving and more stress on par-

ents to source these services."

Joanne Smithers, who works with adults with developmental disabilities and who chairs CUPE's Developmental Services committee, has witnessed firsthand the failures of the Passport Program, a similar experiment with individualized funding that was introduced to cut wait lists for developmental services: "I read the news and thought yep, more privatization and direct funding. [The government] says, with this money, parents can choose to use a government-funded agency or private provider, but if they don't expand government-funded agencies then no one will really have a choice."

Fred Hahn, president of CUPE Ontario and himself a social worker who worked in developmental services, affirmed Smithers' view: "The

Ford government has shown itself again and again to be completely out of touch with what happens on the ground, whether it's with children with autism, their families or workers. It is simply unwilling to commit to proper funding for education and what it takes to achieve better outcomes for students, for children with autism and for their families.

Hahn noted that CUPE Ontario had other concerns about the direct funding model, including the potential for abuse by private, for-profit operators and the lack of a system of oversight for service providers.

CUPE Ontario represents over 260,000 CUPE members across the province, who provide high-quality public services in social services, health care, municipalities, school boards, universities and airlines.



PROUD SUPPORTER OF
420 Wing Oshawa

**420 City of Oshawa WING Royal Canadian Airforce Association
1000 Stevenson Rd N, Oshawa, Ontario L1J 5P5 (905) 723-2845**

