

# Why Public Childcare?



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# Three parts...

- What does “privatized” mean?
- Trends & key facts
- What public childcare *could* be



# Canadian childcare has always been privatized...

- So 'privatization' isn't quite the right descriptor
- Campaign -- move early childhood education and childcare (ECEC) to becoming a public service

.... *Taking it out of the market*

# Childcare market – two questions

## QUESTION #1

### Who pays, and how?

- Parent fees
- Public funds - individualized
  - **allowances**
  - **tax breaks**
  - **subsidies**
- Funding to individual services
- Funding to a *system*
- In Canada today, mostly first two,
  - QC (MN to some extent) fund services

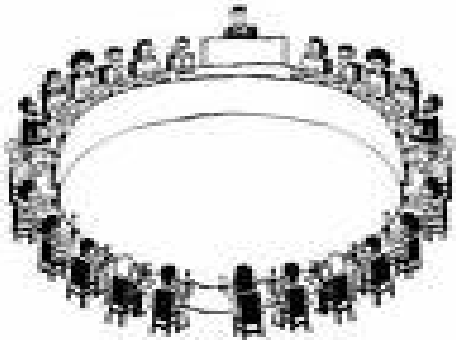
## QUESTION #2

### Who owns?

- Public
- Private for-profit, private non-profit
- In Canada today
  - Little public childcare (ON, QC school-age, AB, SK)
  - 25% for-profit
  - Mostly private non-profit

# Question about who owns: What's public, what's private?

## Public



### Government

- Local
- Municipality/band
- School board

## Private

### Non-profit



### For-profit



# Community-based non-profit childcare

## Private, not public

- Backbone of Canadian childcare
- But....
  - parents, volunteers must create, sustain
  - hard to self-replicate
  - linked to absence of a system, no planning

### THEREFORE...

- equity, access, quality continue to be issues

# CUPE advocates for...

- Much more public funding!
- Funds to programs, not individuals (“direct grants,” “wage grants”)
  - Supply-side, not demand-side
- “Kids are not for-profit”
- Now leading on the next step –  
**public funding *and* public delivery**

# The problem with markets

## Non-profit

- Market model - limited planning, infrastructure
- Relies on volunteers, parent-users
- Uneven development → poor access, SES gradient
- Limited public support → uneven quality

## For-profit

- Public funds diverted to profits, not children
  - Cost-cutting affects quality
  - “Cherry picking” – access
  - Staff interests sacrificed to profits
- .....*Public dollars disappear*

# Trends: Demand

- 77% of mothers of 3-5s in labour force
- Mothers' work participation increasing every year



# Trends: Spaces (2006 - 2008)

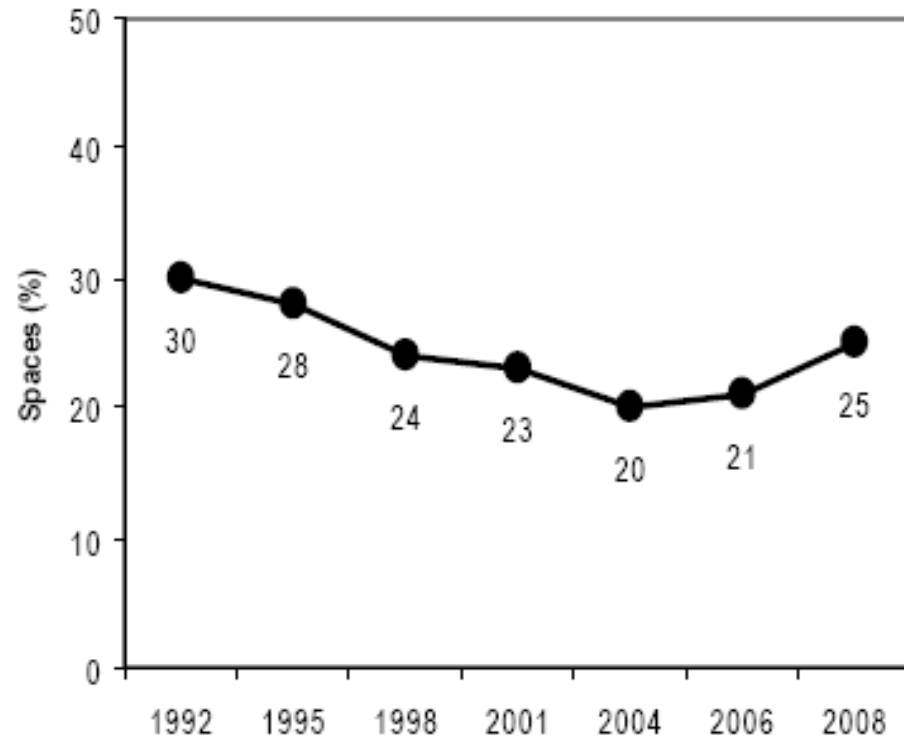
- Spaces - growth slowing down
- Coverage – centre spaces - 20.3% of under-sixes
- Coverage – kindergarten – universal only at age 5; part-day



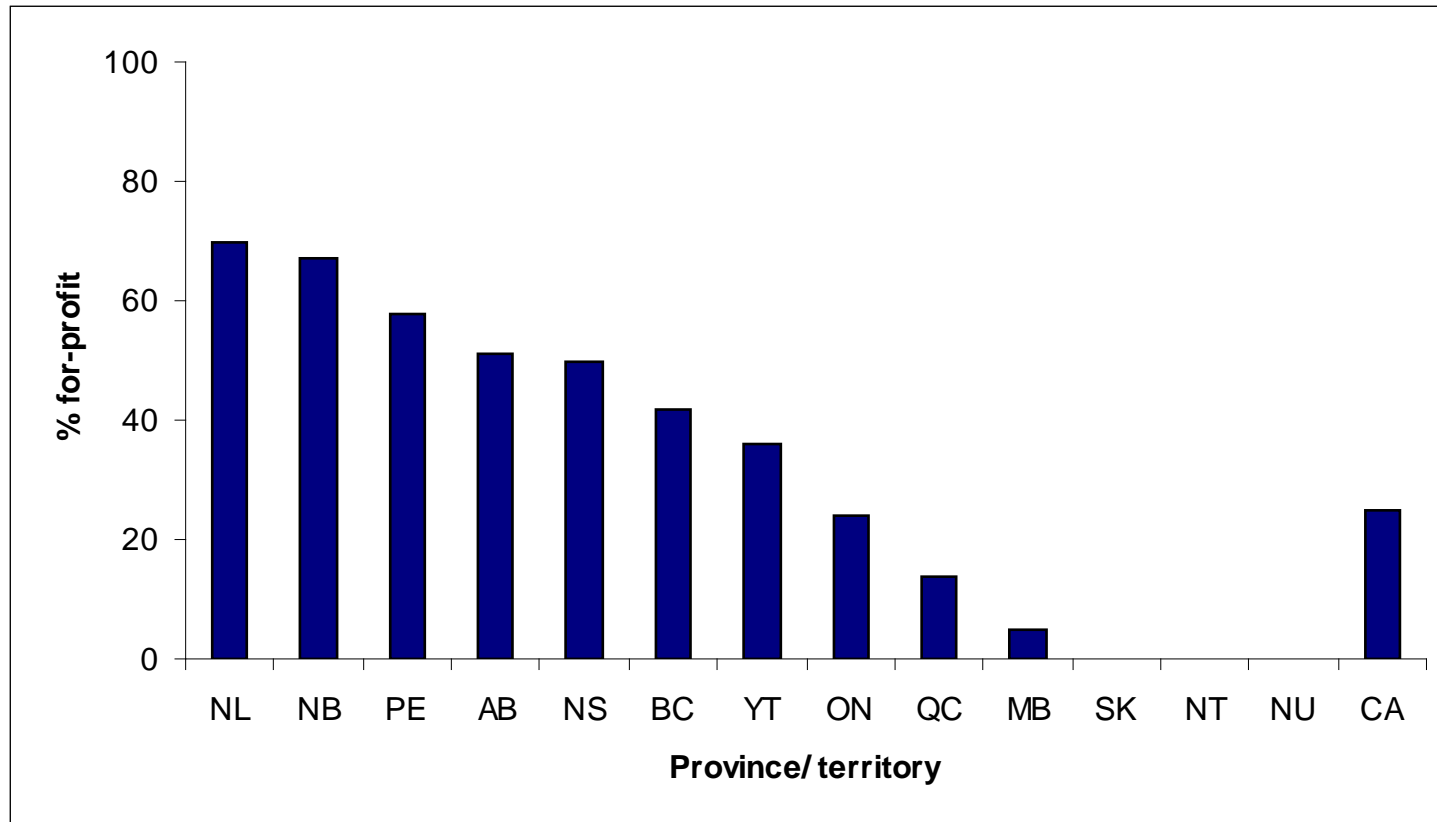
# Trends 2006 - 2008

- Interest in blending child care/kindergarten – provinces
- Slower growth in spaces
- Provincial investment – slowing
- Federal funding - \$600M, down from \$950M
- For-profits increasing rapidly
  - up to 25% of total spaces, from 21%
  - 50%+ growth – 6 of 9 provinces

# Trend – for-profit sector growing



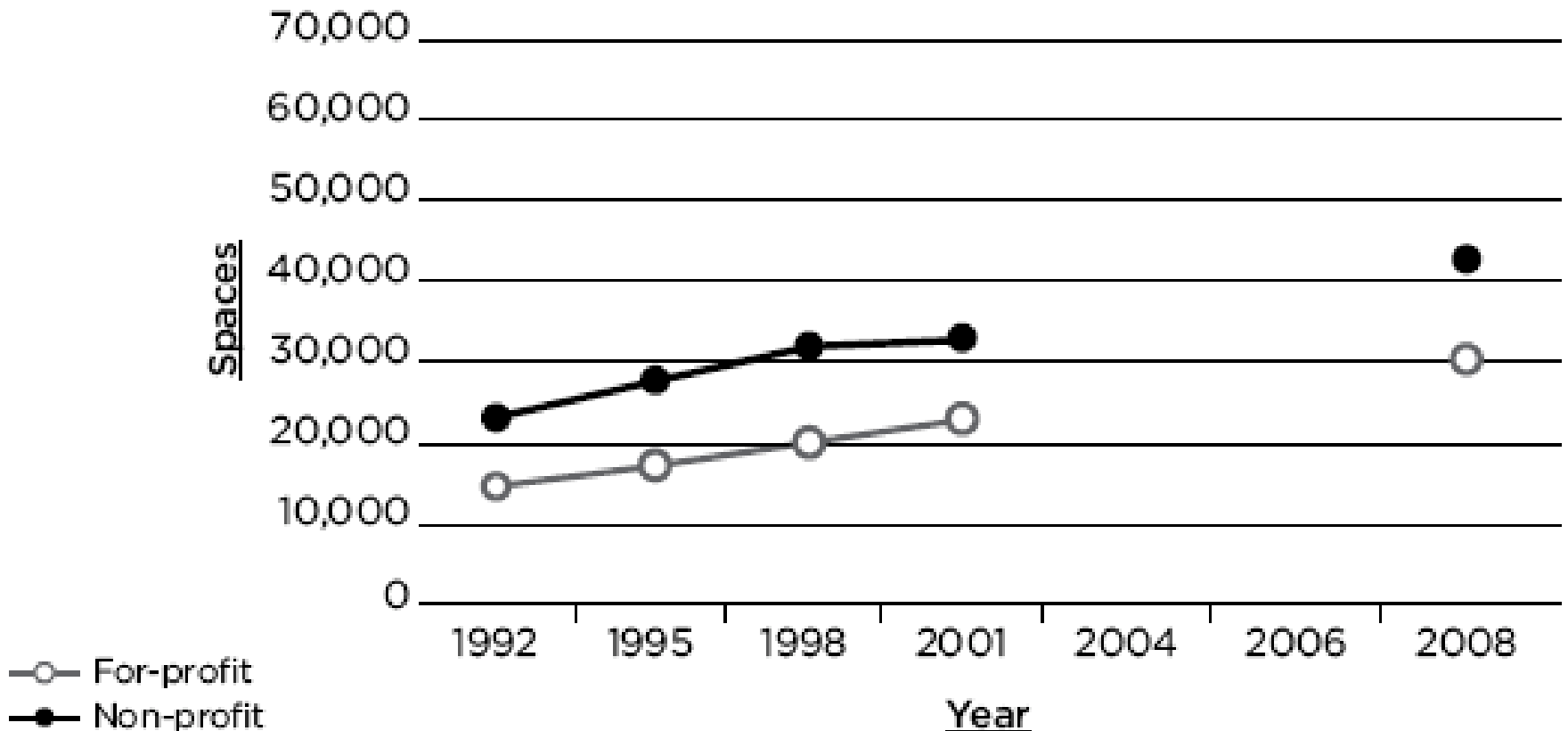
# Trend - For-profits by province 2008



# Troubling Trend: 38.6% (1992) to 41.8% (2008)

**FIGURE 2**

**Sponsorship of regulated centre-based spaces, British Columbia - 1992 - 2008**



# Explaining for-profit growth

- Governments reluctant to spend on polarizing issue
  - ‘family values’
- System-building expensive
  - private “cheaper”
- Funding to parents preferred
  - manage costs,
  - ideology

THEREFORE...

- Ripe market opportunity....
  - entrepreneurs seizing it



# For-profit trends

- Chains – growing
- Most provs/feds encouraging for-profit
- Home-grown chains channelling big-box
  - Kids & Company, Peekabo, Kinderville
- Professional lobbyists
- ABC/123, friends - still out there

# The new look in childcare...

**KINDERVILLE**  
Daycare & Pre-school  
Love, Respect and Openness

Personal & Experienced Early Childhood Educators

- Fully Licensed Program
- Fully Licensed Staff
- Fully Licensed Kitchen
- Fully Licensed Outdoor Area
- Fully Licensed Classroom
- Fully Licensed Restroom
- Fully Licensed Playground
- Fully Licensed Parking
- Fully Licensed Building
- Fully Licensed Fire Alarm
- Fully Licensed Security System
- Fully Licensed Insurance
- Fully Licensed First Aid Kit

464-9358

ChildVentures  
Early Learning Academy



**LITTLE ANGELS**  
DAY CARE  
& PRE-SCHOOL

KIDS

HOURS: 7 AM TO 5:30 PM  
AGES: 6 WKS TO 12 YRS  
362-5192

123  
Busy Beavers  
Learning Centres

weewatch  
enriched home child care



kids &  
COMPANY

A B C

KindergartenKampus  
A Head Start to Learning!



Bright Horizons  
FAMILY SOLUTIONS

Upper Canada  
Child Care

Mini-skool  
A CHILD'S PLACE

in every child is a happy child

MONKEY SEE  
MONKEY DO

Care Tool!

cefa  
Junior Kindergarten

Stepping Stones  
CHILDCARE SERVICES

uals.

# What childcare/ECEC *could* be

- *First and foremost* – designed for children
- But also for parents (work/study/training)
- Family support
- Women's equality, social justice, social inclusion, poverty reduction

.....Multifunctional

# ECEC in 2020...A vision

- Seamless - education/care, flexible, comprehensive
- Accessible to all
- Nurturing, play-based program, child rights idea
- Responsive, inclusive, equitable
- Qualified, fairly-paid, well-respected early childhood educators
- Planned
- Supported – infrastructure, data and research
- Accountable and democratic
- Complemented by social policies supporting families
- *Publicly- funded, publicly-delivered*

# Principles – Universal access

- All children – parents/ home, parents/working
- Right to high quality ECEC in the community for all classes, abilities, parents' life style
- Non-compulsory
- Affordable



# Principles - High Quality

- Early childhood important *in own right*, not just prep for adulthood
- Children - active learners, expressive, exploring, competent
- Inclusive - respecting diversity, including children with disabilities
- Democratic participation



# A high quality *system*

- Elements of high quality system operate as a whole - no “magic bullet”
- System - basis for high quality and access
- Strong public policy - foundation for high quality system
- System necessary to ensure that high quality and access are the **rule**, not the *exception*



**An ECEC system –  
Whole greater than the  
sum of its parts**



# A high quality ECEC *system* – What are the elements?

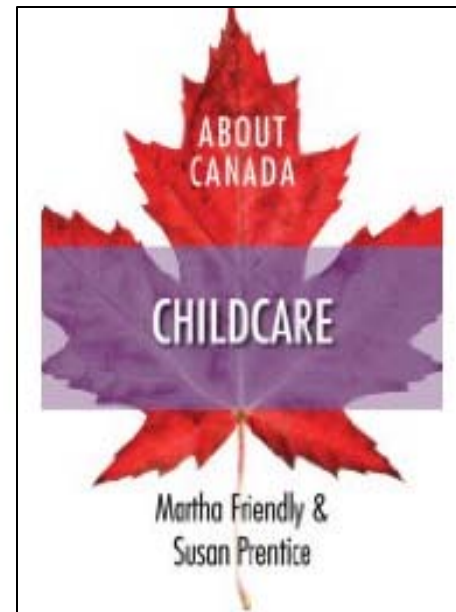
- ▶ Ideas
- ▶ Governance
- ▶ Infrastructure
- ▶ Planning and policy development
- ▶ Financing
- ▶ Human resources
- ▶ Physical environment
- ▶ Data, research and evaluation



# For more about the vision ...see

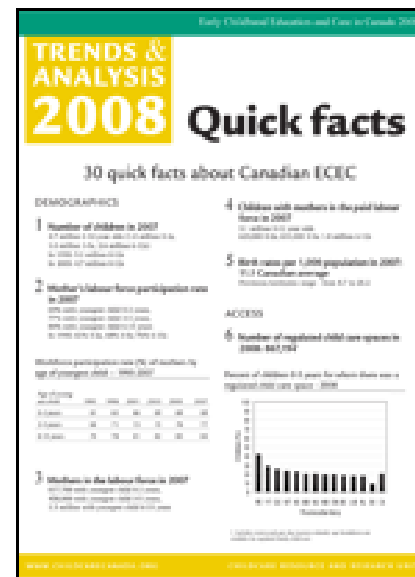
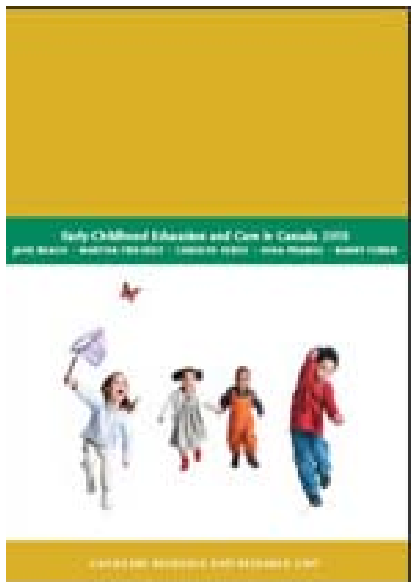


*From vision to action:  
Early childhood  
education and care  
in 2020 - Friendly  
and Prentice*



# Data sources

- ECEC in Canada 2008
- 30 Quick Facts about Canadian ECEC



# Moving forward

- Next steps ?
- Allies?
- False solutions?
- Effective strategies for getting universal **publicly-funded, publicly-delivered ECEC?**

