

## **RE: Childcare Workforce Vaccinations**

Dear Mayor John Tory, Dr. Eileen de Villa, Mr.Keith Irish, Mr.Jack Heath, Mr.Joe Li and Mr. Jim Jones

My name is Nazanin Hessezadeh-Hesse and I am an Early Childhood Educator/child care worker at Pape children's House, a non-profit child care centre located at 220 Langley Ave, Toronto, Ontario and also living in york region, ward 1. (A hot spot neighbourhood)

Last week, we heard the Premier of Ontario announce that schools will be closed for in-person learning and child care will remain open. Alongside that, school staff and special education workers will be prioritized in hotspot neighbourhoods throughout the province. This is good news, however, On sunday morning I reached out to two different places in york region in order to get the Covid vaccine, and in both places I've got rejected, just because I'm not an actual teacher (who are working from home right now!) and am only a simple childcare worker,who even though is physically in contact with 16 children in a preschool classroom including special needs children is not qualified to get the vaccine!! While I was insisting that, I am an essential worker, who can't work from home and is living in a hot spot area, they answered me that, I'm not forced to work during this time and my employer can't force me to work!!!

I am highly concerned that educators who work in child care centres haven't been included in this refocused vaccination approach.

Everyday, I work with an unmasked, unvaccinated and vulnerable population. Despite my centre's vigilant efforts to mitigate the transmission of COVID in our early learning space, I am still in regular direct contact with young children, many of whom cannot wear masks and do not yet understand physical distancing. It is so humiliting and frustrating to face that situation and feel not being seen and appreciated for what we are doing everyday as essential workers in this society and also shows how the system allows discriminatory views to happen in education field.

The work I do everyday is truly essential to the health, well-being and economy of our city and it is essential that I am protected. I have been on the frontline of this pandemic providing vital early learning and care for our city's youngest citizens. Families and caregivers, especially in our most vulnerable neighbourhoods, depend on child care centres as a safe early learning and care community for their young children. The need for action is urgent; Ontario needs vaccinations for all ECEs and child care workers, now.

As leaders in our community, I am looking to you to take swift action that is proactive, solutions-based and centralizes community care. We are seeing Public Health Units in regions of Ontario refocus their vaccination strategy. The Niagara Region has confirmed that they will be vaccinating all of their frontline educators and Early Childhood Educators over the April school break but In York Region, they are simultaneously vaccinating frontline workers while rolling out the Province's Phase II of vaccinations but not childcare workers! I am asking that you ensure our Public Health Unit prioritizes ECEs and child care workers, immediately.

I look forward to seeing you take bold and immediate action regarding a progressive and effective vaccination strategy that includes Early Childhood Educators and child care workers. The health and well-being of both our children and those responsible for leading them in education and care, depends on it.

Sincerely,  
Nazanin Hessezadeh-Hesse

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