

schools, topping and tailing the school day but be employed by outside operators. For-profit childcare - corporate style - will further intrude.

Instead of money the operators will be offered a ‘modernized’ Day Nurseries Act, centred on an increase in child/staff ratios and decrease in oversight. The Education Act still requires boards to provide out of school care where parent demand is sufficient. A legislated customer base, combined with loosened standards, will be enough for the largest operators to emerge with a stronger market share. They will pick up some of the failing stand-alone programs, pin down exclusive contracts with school boards, focus expansion in schools with catchments of parents able to handle the fees and continue to chip away at any attempts to expand public delivery.

Subsidy wait lists will grow, quality will slide and good job prospects for ECEs will wither but pain for some can still be a gain for others. Before the chaos reaches a crescendo the Minister might signal she is taking control. A new framework for childcare, linking it to education and out of market anarchy is still doable—take a look at what PEI has accomplished in a short timeframe. Rather than leaving the spoils to the survivors, systemic provincial/municipal/community planning backed by respectful communication—until now sorely lacking—would go a long way.

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