

Hansard Wednesday, November 26, 2025

(Kids Online Safety Month, Police Record Checks, Child Care, Services for persons with developmental disabilities)

Kids' online safety and privacy month

Mr. Stephen Blais: Every parent in Ontario knows the worry that comes with handing a child a device. The Internet is now embedded in every part of their lives—in learning, in gaming, in connecting with friends. But alongside those opportunities come real dangers that too many families only learn about after it's too late.

Today, child predators are lurking in dark corners of the Internet. They are entering our homes through the most popular platforms our kids use every day. Through online games like Roblox and Minecraft and countless others, predators can disguise themselves, build trust with children and begin to groom them, often without a parent knowing that it's happening. And, of course, traditional social media platforms continue to expose young people to cyberbullying, exploitation, trafficking and manipulation.

Madam Speaker, this isn't theoretical. Police forces across Ontario are sounding the alarm. Educators are overwhelmed. Parents are terrified that, despite doing everything right, someone can reach your child through a game or an app or even a school-based device.

That's why my colleagues and I have introduced legislation to proclaim October as Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month, a dedicated, province-wide effort to educate families, strengthen awareness and empower parents with the tools they need to keep their children safe. This month will highlight the importance of digital supervision, responsible online habits and honest conversations in our schools. It will remind all of us—parents, teachers, tech companies and legislators—that protecting kids online is a shared responsibility.

Services for persons with developmental disabilities

Mr. Jeff Burch: I rise today to share a message on behalf of developmental service agencies I've been meeting with in the Niagara region, a dedicated group of organizations serving collectively over 7,000 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and employing collectively over 1,600 people in Niagara.

Across Ontario, over 52,000 people are currently on wait-lists for developmental services. In Niagara alone, approximately 9,000 individuals are waiting—many for years—for the supports they need to live safely with dignity and in community.

These statistics are similar in all regions of Ontario. More people wait for service than who are currently being served.

These wait-lists are not just numbers. They represent real people: children, youth and adults who, without timely support, often end up in crisis. Some are hospitalized unnecessarily. Others tragically find themselves in the judicial system. These outcomes are avoidable and unacceptable.

The developmental services sector sees first-hand the consequences of underfunding. We also see the transformative impact of adequate, responsive services. When people are met where they are, whether through supportive living, respite or family supports, they thrive, families stabilize and communities grow stronger.

We call for adequate, sustained funding to ensure that people on wait-lists are not left behind. Every person deserves the opportunity to live a full life, supported and included.

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Police record checks

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: Since the change to centralized and provincially standardized police checks, there have been an increasing number of negative effects for Ontarians. I have been contacted by nurses, teachers, coaches and social workers who are facing significant delays in receiving vulnerable sector checks. Some are waiting over three months. These delays have led to rescinded job offers because individuals cannot start work without the required clearance. Long-term-care homes are even struggling to hire staff because no one can obtain their vulnerable sector clearance in time.

Speaker, imagine being offered the job of your dreams or maybe even a job just to make ends meet. The initial relief of being told the job is yours—you think, “No problem. I’m good to go.” You’re told, “One last step.” That step turns into a protracted delay, and your almost-employer has to pass you over. Hope turns into heartbreak.

We must find a better way forward. Previously, when municipal governments handled these checks, the average wait time was two to three weeks. What’s going wrong? Triton Canada is the vendor of record for OPP background checks and handles the intake. Is this middleman necessary? Is this red tape?

The CBC reported a social worker left Ontario because she couldn’t afford to live here. She moved to Labrador for a job contingent on a background check. At publication time, she had waited 45 days and figured she’d be without income for three months.

Speaker, the negative consequences of this centralized system far outweigh the benefits. I urge immediate action to address this issue.

Child care

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Speaker, women make up 75% of Ontario’s community public service workforce, the very workers who hold up the care economy. But instead of investing in the jobs, in the services that women count on, after eight years of Conservative government, funding for social services has fallen 16%, and the FOA says that the government is going to be short, get this, \$7 billion just to maintain—just to maintain—the basic services. Meanwhile, workers, mostly women, are paid so little that they are struggling to feed their own families, even as they care for ours.

How can the Premier claim to support women’s economic opportunity when his own cuts have pushed the care economy to the brink?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Associate Minister of Women’s Social and Economic Opportunity.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I was elected in 2022. That’s when we changed the name of the ministry from “women’s issues” to “women’s social and economic opportunity,” because we know the driving factor that contributes to violence against women is economic instability. It only took four years for the members opposite to realize this, so thank you, I guess.

This is why we contributed \$1.4 billion to Ontario-STANDS, which is our strategy to address and end violence against women. The last pillar that anchors the strategy is “promote economic security.” This is why we’ve invested over \$41 million in 58 organizations across the province to

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ensure that women have training and wraparound supports so that they can complete their training and get jobs in the trades, in high-growth sectors, in any sector that they want to.

Madam Speaker, we will do everything that we can—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Parkdale–High Park.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: It seems that the FAO is telling this minister that she has been failing at her job.

Women make up 96% of the child care workforce, and child care is that lifeline that allows mothers to work, to study, to rebuild their lives, especially those fleeing violence, yet the fees are still \$19 a day, the spaces are scarce and the sector is short 10,000 RECEs because wages are so low that the workers cannot stay.

Will this government finally deliver affordable, accessible child care with a real workforce strategy, or will it continue to hold back the very women our economy depends on?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the associate minister.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Madam Speaker, you know it was our government that made sure that women, or any worker who is in child care, can ladder up to make sure they become registered ECEs so they can earn higher paycheques and contribute even more to our society that we need. We know that women are important to our economy, which is why we are working hard to ensure our economy is strong. You cannot have a strong economy when you don't have healthy workers.

That's why we invest heavily to get women into the trades, women I met, like Sarah, who came from doing nothing to getting into our Women's Economic Security Program and is now a carpenter. That was through a program in Burlington.

It is programs like these that are making sure that women have opportunities, which is why we call our ministry women's social and economic opportunities. We will always work hard to ensure that Ontario is the best place for women to be able to get a job, earn an income—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

Services for persons with developmental disabilities

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. While this government continues to shovel out the SDF cash to friends and families, this government also continues to starve developmental services in Ontario.

Central West Specialized Developmental Services recently forced adults with developmental disabilities out of their group homes and into a single Oakville facility without their consent. Since then, families report a rapid decline in care, and they say their loved ones' safety and well-being are now at serious risk. Disability rights advocates have called it "unconscionable," and families have received almost no information from management or the board, yet the government says it won't get involved.

Speaker, this government funds this agency. It sets its quality standards. How can they justify staying out of this when vulnerable adults are moved without their consent and put at risk?

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Hon. Michael Parsa: I thank my honourable colleague for the important question. Speaker, our government believes that every Ontarian with developmental disabilities deserves to live with dignity, with respect, in a setting that supports their individual needs.

Madam Speaker, while my honourable colleague knows that collective bargaining is between the employer and the union, as government, of course, we urge both parties to reach a deal to be able to provide those supports as quickly as possible. That is what our message is to both parties.

But when it comes to the developmental services sector, we have invested, this year alone, \$3.7 billion in the sector. To put that in perspective, that is more than \$1.4 billion since we formed government in 2018, Madam Speaker.

Supportive housing has increased: \$2.4 billion in supportive housing, an increase of—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Don Valley North.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Speaker, the minister's answer was about process. This is a question about people.

In the gallery this morning is Shannon Beddoe, whose brother Chris was moved to the Oakville facility without his consent. He is now living in a converted storage closet. Shannon has reached out to the minister's office on October 27 and has not even received a reply, so let me read to the House a passage from Shannon's letter:

"To watch this happen, as a sister, is devastating. To go from (his 'true bedroom at his true home') to a windowless room with nothing but a cardboard box by his bed is a denial of his humanity. I am fearful he is starting to internalize the message. I am fearful that he will wonder if maybe ... he is of lesser worth, and he doesn't deserve better than this."

So Speaker, I will ask the minister for three things: (1) Will you order an urgent compliance inspection of CWSDS, (2) report the inspection findings and corrective actions to the families, and (3) convene talks with the employers and the union so Ontarians with disabilities are not used as pawns in a labour dispute?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Madam Speaker, as a government and certainly as a minister, I require every agency to have strong contingency plans in place to make sure every individual who is receiving services and supports through that organization receives the best care possible. And as I mentioned, Madam Speaker, we have invested more than \$3.7 billion in the sector to make sure that they receive those quality services.

It wasn't long ago, under the previous government—the Liberal government that the member is a part of—that they failed the people of this province. Families were languishing on wait-lists. They had no access to any support.

It was our government that stepped in and said, "Time for talk is over; now it's time for action." It's why we hold providers accountable. It's why we put families first. It's why we put individuals first. I won't take any lessons from the Liberals, certainly, when it comes to protecting the most vulnerable in this province—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The leader of the third party will come to order. I will start warning people.