



**STATEMENT FROM THE CANADIAN OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES UNION
LOCAL 468
Supporting Children and Youth with Autism and their Families
March 12, 2019**

As front-line workers who provide Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) services to children and youth with Autism for Thames Valley Children's Centre in a variety of environments in Chatham-Kent, Elgin-Middlesex-Oxford, Essex, Grey Bruce, Huron Perth, and Lambton we stand with the families and urge the government to reconsider the drastic cuts to direct public and non-profit services in their community.

We are shocked and saddened by the action the government of this province has taken in playing a shell game with the children and their families, eliminating the wait list for Autism Services but in turn offering less therapy services for more children.

Our members know firsthand how much therapy is required for these children/youth to reach their best potential. The current funding and a sliding scale based on age and income alone will not be enough to secure the services they require. We are especially concerned for the families residing in the rural and less populated areas.

We call upon the government to:

- Listen to and address the concerns of the families and their real world evidence and ensure that the necessary supports and services are in place.
- Review and revisit some of the alternative sustainable, evidence-based strategies provided during the consultations with the Regional Autism Providers of Ontario (RAPON.)

COPE 468 will remain committed to the fight for services for children/youth with Autism and their families throughout this transition and stand with them in solidarity. Ontario can do better than this most recent gutting of the OAP. Shame on Premier Doug Ford and Minister Lisa MacLeod.

In Solidarity,

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