

Hello to the Future.

That address is not as grandiose as it sounds, as I know that by the time this email is sent, and later read out to you, it will inevitably be the future. However, I intend to feel grandiose, and in doing so, to hold you accountable for your place in history.

Today you are fortunate to be sitting in a class directed towards future leaders. That is what you are, that is what we are, leaders and mentors of the future. I'm writing to you today because I am not sure that my generation of early childhood educators fully understands what that means. We spend a lot of time focusing on what it means to support children with proper guidance, practice, and development-- and rightly so. However, we spend less time focusing on the rest of the ecological system that contributes to ensuring quality care, and this is a part of our role as early childhood educators that can no longer stand to be neglected.

There is a level of professionalism in our field that needs to be redefined, and that requires a new generation of early childhood educators to embody that change. We need to advocate on behalf of our profession, so that we are better supported by a society, and a government that can better support us to support families and children.

Our government agreed to support the United Nations in upholding the Universal Rights of the Child. Our government is failing to do that, and our children are paying the price. It is our responsibility to advocate on behalf of our children because the way we treat children as a society is indicative of our beliefs as a culture. As a whole, our society needs to band together to do our part in supporting our future.

In your classes, you will learn the merits of early childhood education are cross-curricular. You will be able to discuss how you support children's development emotionally, socially, creatively, cognitively, and physically. You will be able to defend the importance of your work because there is strong evidence in support of the importance of the early years on holistic development. However, we need to defend the fact that early childhood care and learning is at the core, a right. It is a human right!

November 20 will mark the Universal Day of the Child as recognized by the United Nations and this is a call to action to participate in recognizing the Rights of the Child. I challenge you to commit to a social movement of influencing change. I challenge you to perform at least 10 actions, in the 10 days between November 20, and November 30 to be a part of the collective identity that demands that change. Some ideas: write a letter to your MLA, to your MP, to the premier, to the prime minister holding them accountable for the promises made by our government. Write a letter to the editor about how universal childcare would impact you. Engage in a conversation with a stranger about why universal childcare is a right, and demands a publicly-funded system, like healthcare, in our country. Create art, put it in the streets. Sing, and raise awareness about your cause. Use whatever forum is comfortable for you and be a part of this social movement.

In doing so, you will support the strong, dedicated, and passionate leaders that inspire us. You will inspire others to participate in democracy. And you will recommit to your promise for the future. You will send them the message that they matter, and they cannot be ignored.

To remain inspired, document your efforts with the tags #YACAN (this group was formed at the national conference in solidarity with Young Advocates of Canada), #rethinkchildcare (they have a video to help you spread the message), #childcare2020 (there is an amazing Twitter feed to inspire you with multidisciplinary leaders in support of childcare).

If you want to get involved with YACAN, please email me atlindsay.lichty@gmail.com and I will add you to this establishing group.

Wishing you all the best! I look forward to a future with all of us as leaders.

In solidarity,
Lindsay Lichty