

Improve Child Care

Early childhood education is essential to support parents' employment and learning, and necessary in any poverty-reduction strategy. Yet our country is lagging behind. Before the Conservative government came to power, Canadians were very close to achieving a national child care program. Instead, Stephen Harper gave us a pitiful monthly allowance – and no new child care spaces. This does nothing to address the need for child care in our country.

What do we want?

- A national plan to make high quality, non-profit early childhood education and care a reality over the next decade.
- Increased federal funds, starting with an additional \$1.2 billion in the first year and a steady growth in spending in the following years.
- Federal legislation (recognizing Quebec's distinctiveness) to establish conditions, criteria and principles for the accountable use of federal funds in the provinces and territories.
- Improved maternity/parental leave policy to complement the child care program.

Cheques aren't child care

- The Conservatives claim to be investing in early learning and child care, but over 80 per cent of their child care budget goes to parents in the form of a taxable \$100 monthly cheque.
- The federal government web site boasts that much of this spending goes to recreational activities or basic necessities—it certainly doesn't cover the cost of child care.
- Less than 25 per cent of federal child care spending actually goes toward early learning and child care.

Child care is in crisis

- Since the Conservatives came to power in 2006, the expansion of child care spaces has dropped to its lowest level in years.
- Parents can't find or afford child care and centres are closing due to a lack of funding.
- The child care field is losing trained staff because of low wages and poor working conditions.

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