



Federal budget 2008 and Early Learning and Child Care

What's in the budget?

Absolutely nothing appeared in the budget for child care. The only mention of early childhood development was to firmly place it in the context of the structural policy Advantage Canada that was introduced by the Conservative government in late 2006.

What does it mean for Canadians?

We know that this Conservative government has turned its back on women and working families. Canada will remain at the bottom of the heap of all OECD countries when it comes to investing in early learning and child care. We mustn't forget that this is the government that cut \$1 billion that was previously committed to early learning and child care.

Without a framework and policy on early learning and child care, the government has set out the welcome mat to large corporations to make profits from desperate parents while there is no plan to make programs accessible, available or affordable.

What are the better choices?

A better choice would be to deliver a national early learning and child care program. Such a program could deliver a framework and conditions that ensure quality, affordable, non-profit, accessible,

and inclusive child care programs for parents and their children.

Child care requires secure and adequate federal funding with legislation like bill C303, the Early Learning and Child Care Act, to provide the framework for spending. Bill C303 lays the foundation for a high-quality, universal and accountable child care system. The bill limits expansion of for-profit child care, a move that protects Canada from international trade disputes and ensures the highest quality care.

The long term plan for child care requires building the funding for support to child care programs to \$10 billion annually which is still less than 1% of GDP. This would ensure a quality affordable child care space to all children under age 6. As a start the Alternative federal budget recommended a total child care and early learning budget of \$1.7 billion in 2008-09, growing to \$2.8 billion in 2009-10 and \$3.9 billion in 2010-11, and finally reaching \$5 billion in 2011-12.

The Conservative transfers responsibility for services to individuals in the form of tax measures and to provinces/territories in the form of unrestricted, unaccountable transfer payments. This has undermined the future of early learning and child care. Now, fewer than 20% of 0-12 years old able to access regulated child care services.

For more information, visit www.cupe.ca/budget

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