

Child Care: it should be Child's Play

The wage gap exists if you are single or not, a university graduate or not, have children or not. But women with children still pay a price. Women still bear the primary responsibility for child care, domestic work and caring for elders.

Why Child Care is important for Kids

Children deserve a good head start in life. Quality care supports early learning which is an essential first step. It promotes and equalizes opportunities for all children regardless of income and social background.

While the OECD recommends countries invest 1% of GDP on child care, Canada's investment only reaches 0.3% of GDP, ranking it dead last among the fourteen OECD countries surveyed (including France, UK, USA, Korea, Ireland...).

Why Child Care is important for Women

Two thirds of women with children under three are working outside the home. Meanwhile, seventy-five percent of women whose children are between three and five years old are also doing paid work. Yet, in 2004, only 16% of Canadian children had access to a regulated child care space.

Lack of affordable child care means that many women, especially women who are single parents, cannot work full-time, or cannot join the workforce at all. Child care helps women to stay in the labour force, and access skills training and promotions.

There are more children under the age of five in Canada than there are people in the entire greater Vancouver area. We wouldn't neglect the greater city of Vancouver.

How can we neglect our children?

A comprehensive and affordable national child care system should be a source of good jobs for the economy. The current reality is that despite 67% of child care workers having a post-secondary qualification, their average full-time all year income is less than \$22,000.00 per year, making child care workers one of the lowest-paid skilled jobs.

Why Child care is important for the Economy

Outside Quebec, quality child care is hard to find, and is expensive. The child care program in Quebec has helped to boost the number of women working and paying taxes. In Alberta the low participation of women in the workforce has been attributed to the woeful lack of childcare, in a province with severe labour shortages.

One in six children in Canada (16%) lives in poverty. More than 50% of female lone parents are poor. Access to dependable, affordable child care can help mothers improve the lives of their families. It allows them to train for jobs, and to get decent jobs and keep them, which benefits us all.



Equality
once and for all!



Canadian Labour Congress

Congrès du travail du Canada



Child Care and the Wage Gap

OECD research shows that the gender gap is lowest in countries which provide public child care like France and the Scandinavian countries which on top of their affordable, quality public child care services, also have the most family-friendly workplaces. Here in Canada, Quebec has led the way by not only launching a major child care program, but also by legislating a right to leaves from work to take care of family responsibilities, and greater rights for part-time and temporary workers.

BIG BUSINESS TAX CUTS OR CHILD CARE?

The Conservative Government's tax breaks to big banks and oil companies in October of 2007 could have created 320,455 fully-funded public childcare spaces – a 50% increase in the total number of childcare spaces we currently have (745,000 for 4,804,405 children under 12).

THE GOOD NEWS: Solutions are out there.

We need a government committed to using the Federal spending power to benefit women's equality. The Federal government should not restrict its own ability to work with provinces in their area of jurisdiction to create a Canada-wide system of child care services.

Early learning and child care must be brought to the top of the political agenda. We need a universal, high quality, public/not-for-profit system of early learning and child care. We need to prevent Big Box commercial child care centres from moving into Canada.

What you can do

You can help uncover the failures of the Conservative Party's child care policies and their piecemeal attack on women's rights.

Join with other women to ensure Bill C-303 is passed to make it illegal to direct money to the expansion of for-profit care.

Join the Code Blue campaign for better child care www.buildchildcare.ca.

Call your MP and tell them why we need a national not-for-profit system of early learning and child care.

Join this campaign, find more information on child care and other equality issues on our website at:

www.onceandforall.ca

Check it out!