

Ottawa should help build a national early childhood development system ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Full report in pdf ^[3]

This paper makes the case for federal leadership and financial investment - a total of \$7.5 billion over five years - in a national early childhood development system. Early childhood development services include an array of measures, such as prenatal nutrition, infant stimulation and play groups. Supports for parents involve home visits, parenting classes, family resource centres and respite arrangements. Children in all circumstances can benefit from early childhood development initiatives that foster physical, social and intellectual development during the formative early years. Moreover, because the large majority of households now have both parents in the workforce, child care is a prerequisite for employment in a modern economy.

Under the Caledon proposal, Ottawa would transfer the money to the provinces and territories, subject to reasonable conditions: comprehensiveness, universality, accessibility, quality and accountability. The system of early childhood development ideally would be built upon desirable practice guidelines: service integration, mixed delivery and community base. Other (less desirable) options are presented in the absence of a comprehensive national approach.

Related link: Follow-up report: "A proposed model framework for early childhood development..." ^[4]

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