

Taking responsibility for child care ^[1]

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Source: New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women ^[2]

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AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- Full paper in pdf ^[3]

Excerpts from paper:

Studies have demonstrated that children who received good quality child care had larger vocabularies when they began school as well as superior language skills, higher levels of cognitive functioning and a greater ability to get along with other children. The benefits of high quality child care for economically disadvantaged children appear to be particularly important. Early childhood educators can identify learning disabilities, behavioural and social problems and encourage healthy lifestyle choices. In short, children who get a good start in life will be healthier, happier and more productive citizens. Indeed, many parents send their pre-school age children to child care centres only to ensure they benefit from the stimulation and socialization. Child care should be viewed as an essential service. It is not strictly a women's issue, although women still shoulder most of the child care responsibilities. Child care is a family issue, a societal issue and an economic issue.

"The marketplace doesn't work well for childcare", as child care expert Martha Friendly says. But investment in early childhood education and support for adult employment and training lead to major payoffs down the road. Through savings on social programs, increased productivity and higher tax revenues, we all gain. It is estimated that for each \$1 spent on quality child care, there is a \$2 future return to society.

Providing quality care for New Brunswick children requires action on many fronts. All citizens, whether or not they have young children, need to be aware of the importance of high quality early childhood education and care. Government commitment is essential. A quality sustainable child care system requires a coherent action plan and substantial public funding. Government regulated and coordinated services must be based on early childhood development and care principles. They must also be affordable and responsive to the needs of all parents and children in the province. Flexibility and adaptability are key. Child care should accommodate residents of urban and rural areas, Anglophones, Francophones and Aboriginal peoples, shift and seasonal workers, full-time and part-time employees, infants, children with special needs and school-age children in after-school care.

Region: New Brunswick ^[4]

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