

Government of Canada celebrates second anniversary of the Universal Child Care Benefit ^[1]

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More than 2 million Canadian children have benefited from the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) since it was launched in July 2006. Early in 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a commitment to support Canadian families and give them real choice in child care. The Government of Canada is delivering on that promise by providing families with monthly cheques of \$100 for every child under the age of six. Since the launch of the UCCB, Canadian families have received benefits worth close to \$5 billion.

Today, Parliamentary Secretary Lynne Yelich, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, joined local families, educators and children at the YMCA of Saskatoon, to celebrate the second year of the UCCB and other measures designed to give Canadian families choice in child care.

"This government recognizes that families are the building blocks of society, and we are investing more now than ever before in families with young children. We are committed to providing parents with real choices in deciding what is best for their children. Our Universal Child Care Plan puts parents in charge," said Ms. Yelich.

"The YMCA and YMCA-YWCA provide child care programming to Canadian families across the country, seeing first-hand how parents benefit from having access to quality child care choices," said Ken Muggeridge, Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA of Saskatoon, which hosted the event. "Y child care centres are supportive of Canadian families and children."

The Universal Child Care Benefit is the first part of Canada's Universal Child Care Plan, and is intended to help families balance work and home responsibilities. The second part, introduced in Budget 2007, is the provision of an additional \$250 million per year to provinces and territories to create new child care spaces.

Since April 2007, many provinces and territories have announced plans for new child care spaces-over 60,000 so far. Others are investing in enhancing the quality of their spaces or making child care more affordable for families. This \$250 million is in addition to the \$850 million provinces and territories already receive through the Canada Social Transfer for children's programs and services, bringing the total to \$1.1 billion this year alone.

More and more employers are recognizing that work-family balance is a priority for their employees, and that it makes good business sense to provide them with the supports they need. "That is why we introduced a 25 percent investment tax credit for businesses that create new child care spaces in the workplace," added Ms. Yelich.

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