

Multi-Lateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement long overdue ^[1]

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Full response

Today's signing of the Multi-Lateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework in Ottawa is a long overdue step in supporting Canada's children and families. The Canadian Child Care Federation (CCCCF), along with its provincial and territorial partners congratulate governments for taking this necessary step, but call for further agreements that articulate a fulsome vision, including a national early learning and child care workforce strategy, and further investments that address the comprehensive and holistic needs of children, families and child care services in Canada. Child care, not unlike public education and healthcare services needs to be rooted in equitable standards, availability, accessibility, affordability, inclusivity and high quality for all Canadian children and not just targeted populations.

"Accessing quality child care is an issue that affects families of all types and across all socio-economic statuses. Federal funding, the multi-lateral framework and all further agreements need to build child care systems that consider all children, families and be very clear on what quality child care is", said Don Giesbrecht, CEO of the Canadian Child Care Federation.

Abundant evidence, research and international experience have proven that a universal child care program exceeds in meeting the development goals for all children regardless of their family's social or economic status. We would never think to offer elementary school or health care to only those in greater need. This is a public good for the well-being of all Canadians.

Marni Flaherty, CCCC Chair adds, "This is an important step for children, but clearly more is needed. We look forward to learning more details via the bi-lateral agreements with the provinces and territories and remain, along with our national, Indigenous, provincial and territorial partners willing and able to provide expertise and direction to move Canada forward for children and families."

The CCCC expects the federal government to lead and communicate its long-term vision, details and goals for Canada's child care sector, based on research, evidence and best practice. High quality child care is essential to healthy child development, women's equality, integration of newcomers, poverty reduction, and family support. Canadian families, no matter where they are, want and need child care.

"We know what quality child care is and we know what is necessary to create high quality, affordable child care. Ensuring that Canadian families have a range of choices that meet their needs and that they are of the highest quality needs to be a priority for all levels of government", said Sonya Hooper, Executive Director of CCCC affiliate the Early Childhood Development Association of PEI.

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