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Excerpts from the report:

The 2004-2005 Report on Plans and Priorities outlines Social Development Canada's policy, program and service delivery priorities for the 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 fiscal years. It reflects the larger social and government context in which SDC operates, and the commitment to managing for results that matter to Canadians.

The creation of SDC provides an opportunity to explore new approaches to promoting social development and to renew and strengthen effective social partnerships that respond to the emerging social needs of Canadians. In 2004-2005, SDC will begin working on the conceptual basis for the design of an integrated social policy framework and associated plans for the subsequent implementation, including consultation. The comprehensive social policy framework that will result will be built on the sound base of social programs and policies that governments have put in place over the years to support the well-being of individuals, families and communities and their inclusion and participation in Canadian society.

This conceptual work and the resulting framework will guide the Department's new and evolving policy direction over the planning horizon of the next three years. We will consult Canadians on social issues, and work in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, the non-profit and voluntary sector and other partners in

Canadian society to develop social policies, programs and services that meet the needs of the 21st century.

Effective support to children and families will be one focus of the framework. There is strong evidence that highest social investment payoffs come from investing in the early years, which lay the foundation for health, well-being and learning later in life. For example, continued focus on early learning and quality child care will need to consider what steps are necessary to ensure that all Canadian children have a good start in life and that families have the tools they need to provide care and nurturing. **Region: Canada**

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