

What the parties are promising parents in the 2019 federal election ^[1]

Parties are making direct appeals to voters with kids

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EXCERPTS

Campaign season for Canada's 2019 federal election is well underway, and the parties have started releasing their platforms.

The Oct. 21 election will elect members to the 43rd Canadian Parliament. Some of the defining issues parties will be tackling in their campaigns this year include climate change, affordability, jobs, and ethics.

But with just more than half of Canadian couples living with at least one child, according to the last census, parties have also been making direct appeals to voters with kids.

Promises are already being made for parental leave, tax credits for parents, and the Canada Child Benefit. We'll keep this list updated throughout the campaign, but **here are the platform issues that directly affect parents that have been revealed so far:**

1. The Liberal platform

The promise: Boost the Canada Child Benefit

What it means: If re-elected, Liberals would increase the Canada Child Benefit by 15 per cent for children under one, which would be an increase of up to \$1,000.

The promise: Make maternity and parental leave benefits tax-free.

What it means: No taxes will be taken off EI cheques when parents get them.

The promise: New leave for adoptive parents

What it means: Adoptive parents get the same benefits as other parents. That means an extra \$7,000 in parental leave payments for the average family who could claim the proposed new leave.

The promise: More before and after school child-care spaces

What it means: The Liberal government would work with provincial and territorial governments to create up to 250,000 more spaces for children enrolled in programs offered before and after school. The will also cut the child care fees by 10 per cent.

The promise: Guaranteed paid family leave for families who don't qualify for EI

What it means: "Parents who don't qualify for paid leave through Employment Insurance or don't get enough, because they're between jobs, earn little, or haven't worked enough hours, will receive a guaranteed income during the first year of their child's life," the Liberal website explains. This would launch in 2021, CBC News adds.

2. The Conservative platform

The promise: Tax credits for sports and arts programs

What it means: If Andrew Scheer is elected, parents would receive up to \$150 back on their taxes per child up to the age of 16 for enrolling their kids in sports and fitness classes, and another \$75 for putting them in arts and learning programs, including dance class.

The promise: Help with college and university savings plans

What it means: The Conservatives are proposing to increase Ottawa's contribution to the registered education savings plan (RESP) from 20 per cent to 30 per cent for every dollar families add to the savings program, up to \$2,500 per year.

The promise: Maternity and parental leave tax credit

What it means: Scheer said the "tax free" plan could save new parents \$4,000 based on an annual income of \$50,000 (experts have

pointed out what he is actually proposing is a tax refund of 15 per cent).

3. The NDP platform

The promise: “Quality, affordable child care when you need it.”

What it means: While NDP leader Jagmeet Singh has yet to release the specifics, the NDP website promises “to make child care better for families by investing \$1 billion in 2020 and growing that investment annually, along with the provinces and territories.”

The promise: Affordable post-secondary education

What it means: Again, specifics have yet to be released, but the campaign website promises it will work with the provinces and territories to “cap and reduce tuition fees and building towards making post-secondary education part of our public education system.” They will also increase access to non-repayable Canada Student Grants.

The promise: Ending funding discrimination for children.

What it means: If elected, the NDP will “make sure that all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, young people, and families are treated with the respect and care that they deserve.” This will include resourcing Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare systems, work with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society to implement the Spirit Bear Plan, and fully implement Jordan’s Principle.

4. The Green Party platform

The promise: Free post-secondary tuition

What it means: Eliminate post-secondary education tuition and forgive the portion of existing student debt that is held by the federal government.

The promise: Affordable child care for all children

What it means: “A Green government will collaborate with provinces/territories, local communities, Indigenous communities and the child-care sector to ensure that a comprehensive short-, medium- and long-term policy road map – based on the principles of universality, affordability, quality, inclusivity and equity – finally becomes a reality,” their party platform website notes.

“A Green Party government will immediately begin to ramp up federal child care funding to achieve the international benchmark of at least one per cent of GDP annually, adding an additional \$1 billion each year until this benchmark is reached with a mature ELCC system. We will eliminate GST on all construction costs related to child-care spaces.”

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