

The Green Party of Canada's 2019 federal election commitments ^[1]

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Taking care of Canada's children

Greens believe it is time to put the interests of our children at the centre of decision-making. If a policy works for our children, it works for our society. Greens will appoint a federal Children's Advocate to ensure that children's rights are protected. Far too many children are in care. Far too many children are in poverty. And far too many of those children are Indigenous. Every Canadian child deserves equal services, from early childhood education to adulthood.

Meanwhile, families need child care. Universal child care is fundamental for women's equality – the “ramp to equality in the workplace for women.”

Canada needs a plan – a road map to affordable child care for all children. 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.

Canada must dedicate additional resources to making a universal, affordable, early learning and child-care (ELCC) system a reality. It cannot occur without public funding. Canada needs an ELCC system that contributes to a green Canada. Thus, a Green Party government's child care plan will provide the early educator jobs that sustain local GREEN PARTY OF CANADA 2019 63 communities. It will also recognize that sparsely and unevenly available child-care services force parents to take out-of-their-way routes to child care and work, often by car. Green Party plans for child care take into account not only parents' convenience but also climate goals. Location of child care must reflect the diversity of family needs and be placed along existing public transit routes, including neighbourhood schools, other local buildings, workplaces and transportation hubs.

The best evidence suggests that ELCC is best situated within the context of other policies that support families and children. A Green Party government will follow the example of Quebec and other countries, improving and strengthening maternity/parental leave by making it more inclusive, more flexible and better paid.

Well-designed ELCC is also fundamental to meeting broader equity and social justice goals, for fighting poverty, as a foundation for children's life-long learning, and as part of the backbone of a thriving society. Quality child care yields high social and economic returns in the short and long term by:

- Supporting women's workforce participation, education and training.
- Strengthening children's health, development and well-being in the early years to provide a strong foundation for learning and living in later years.
- Strengthening inclusion and respect for diversity for children with disabilities, diverse ethnic and racial groups, newcomers and disadvantaged Canadians.
- Countering Canada's slide towards being a more unequal society.

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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commitments

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