

Q-and-A: Flamborough-Glanbrook candidates outline plans for child care ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

As part of its comprehensive coverage of the federal election, the Review invited each of the Flamborough-Glanbrook riding candidates to weigh in on a particular issue. This is the second in a three-part question-and-answer with your local candidates. Their responses are featured in reverse alphabetical order. People's Party of Canada candidate David Tilden did not supply a response.

CHILD CARE: Parents in Flamborough-Glanbrook want to know their children are well cared for at licensed child-care facilities. However, access to these facilities can sometimes depend on a family's ability to pay. Across the country, child-care fees vary wildly; the national monthly average is more than \$900, with some facilities in the GTHA charging nearly double that amount. If elected, what would you do to ensure our youngest citizens can secure a spot at a licensed child-care facility that won't break the bank?

DAVID SWEET • CONSERVATIVE

As a father of five children, I understand how important it is to have access to safe and affordable child care. That's why I was so supportive when our previous Conservative government introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit in 2006 — to provide parents with direct support for their child care, on a monthly basis.

In this election, Canada's Conservatives are focused on ensuring that there is more money in your pocket so you can better afford the child care you and your children need. This includes proposals for a universal tax cut, children's arts and fitness tax credits, and our plan to make maternity and paternity benefits tax-free.

A Conservative government would also boost the government share of contributions to Registered Education Savings Accounts, so that you can put more money away for your children's future. It's all part of our plan to help Canadian families, individuals and seniors to get ahead.

JENNIFER STEBBING • LIBERAL

For many families with elementary schoolchildren, finding a spot in before- and after-school care programs in communities in Flamborough-Glanbrook will be difficult and expensive. In 2019, less than one in three elementary school kids will be able to get a space — and in Ontario, for families lucky enough to get a spot, it will cost them more than \$4,000 this year.

A re-elected Liberal government will help parents with elementary school kids by creating up to 250,000 more before- and after-school spaces; putting \$800 back into the pockets of the average Ontario family of four by lowering parents' fees by 10 per cent across the country; and dedicating a portion of the new spaces to provide more child-care options for parents who work overtime, late shifts, or multiple jobs so they can count on help when they need it most.

JANET ERRYGERS • GREEN

Universal child care is fundamental for women's equality. Canada needs a plan — a road map to affordable child care for all children. A Green government's child-care plan will provide early educator jobs that sustain local communities. It will also recognize that unevenly available child-care services force parents to take out-of-their-way routes to child care and work.

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

A Green government will immediately ramp up federal child-care funding to achieve the international benchmark of 1 per cent of GDP annually, adding an additional \$1 billion each year until this benchmark is reached. We will also eliminate GST on all construction costs related to child-care spaces.

ALLISON CILLIS • NDP

So many young families in Flamborough-Glanbrook say they struggle to finding child-care spaces and are paying huge amounts for the child care they need. We are living in a country that child care costs are among the highest in the world. As a mother of a two-and-a-half year-old, I how difficult it is to find affordable and quality child care.

Our vision is to give families relief. Parents should be able to find the child care they need, when they need it and with a licensed provider making a fair wage.

We will work with other levels of government, Indigenous communities, families and child-care workers to ensure that care is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children. We will do this by investing \$1 billion in 2020 and growing that investment annually, along with the provinces and territories. No parent should ever have to be forced between having a family and having a career.

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