

Green Party calls for universal access to affordable, child-care ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

OTTAWA – The Green Party of Canada will dedicate additional resources to making universal, affordable, early learning and childcare (ELCC) system a reality. This plan will provide support for parents, enhance early learning to benefit children and reduce greenhouse gases. The Green childcare plan will also provide the early educator jobs that sustain local communities.

Thunder Bay-Rainy River Green Party candidate Amanda Moddejonge says, “As a woman that struggled as a single mother I can tell you that families need more access to affordable quality childcare. The Green Party plans will not only increase the number of spaces available, but it will help provide the skilled labour force to provide this service better.”

Bruce Hyer, the Green Party Candidate in Thunder Bay-Superior North says, “Canada’s most valuable resource is our children. Universal childcare is a critical investment in our future... and theirs.”

“Working families and single parents must have access to affordable childcare,” said Green Party Leader Elizabeth May. “Families are struggling to make ends meet in Canada. Universal childcare is also fundamental for women’s equality – literally the ‘ramp to equality in the workplace’ for women.”

The Green Party’s 2019 election platform includes a pledge to ramp up federal spending on childcare by \$1 billion each year until Canada achieves the international benchmark of at least one per cent of GDP annually.

The Green Party recognizes that the lack of available child-care services forces many parents to go out of their way as they drive to childcare and work. The Party’s childcare proposals will have the dual benefit of greater convenience for parents and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

“Everything that involves transportation must take into consideration reducing our carbon footprint,” said Ms. May. “So when it comes to urban planning we will ensure that there are child-care facilities along existing public transit routes. These centres need to be located close to neighborhood schools, workplaces, and transportation hubs in order to reflect the diversity of family needs. If it works for our children, then it works for our society.”

A Green government will appoint a federal Children’s Advocate to ensure that children’s rights are protected. Ms. May noted that far too many children are in care or living in poverty and many of those children are Indigenous.

“Every single child in this country must have access to equal service, from early childhood education to adulthood. These are the future citizens of Canada. We need to ensure that families have the support they need so that all Canadian children can thrive.”

Acknowledging that extensive evidence suggests that ELCC is best situated within the context of other policies that support families and children, the Green Party also calls for:

- Improving and strengthening maternity/parental leave by making it more inclusive, more flexible and better paid, following the example of Quebec and other countries.
- Designing a robust ELCC that meets the broader equity and social justice goals for fighting poverty.

“Creating a solid foundation for Canadian children’s life-long learning is investing in Canada’s future,” said Ms. May. “And since the climate emergency also affects that future, Greens will act immediately to keep the global average temperature increase below 1.5 degrees C, so that they can grow up into a livable world,” concluded Ms. May.

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