

A critical discourse analysis of Canada's childcare policy choices through a children-centred lens ^[1]

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Excerpted from abstract

The state of childcare in Canada is an issue of children's rights that warrants critical examination. Grounded by a children-centred lens, this study reveals the ways in which systems of power in Canada exert their control over policy issues related to children through political discourse. Using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, integrated with Fairclough and Fairclough's Political Discourse Analysis, key moments in the history of childcare in Canada were explored between 1984 and 2017. The research question that guides the analysis explored change and continuity related to the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children embedded within the political discourse of three governing political parties in Canada: The Progressive Conservatives (1984-1993), the Liberals (1993-2006), the Conservatives (2006-2015), and the Liberals (2015-present). Analysis reveals the ways childhood and children are viewed and valued by these governing bodies of power, and how these views and values have influenced the development of childcare policies, which have, thus far, ignored children-centred considerations to childcare. The main conclusion from this research study is that the constructions of childhood and the collective identities of children, and the views and values related childcare, have changed significantly throughout history. What remains constant is how these constructions and values are influenced by adult-centric economic, social and political interests of the era. As such, policy decisions made in the "best interests of children" warrant scrutiny and demand a level of accountability, through a human rights framework, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). While Canada is a signatory to the UNCRC, thus committing the country to upholding children's rights, including that of childcare, its Federal governments, throughout a history that spans more than three decades, have never promoted children's rights in a meaningful way.

Region: Canada ^[4]

Tags: policy ^[5]

child rights ^[6]

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