

Canada tied for last in UNICEF child care ranking [CA] ^[1]

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- Martha Friendly on CTV News (4:56) ^[2]

- UNICEF's Nigel Fisher on Canada AM (3:48) ^[3]

EXCERPTS

Canada is tied for last place in a UNICEF ranking of the early child-care services offered by 25 developed countries.

Canada failed to meet nine out of 10 of the proposed benchmarks UNICEF used to rank the countries.

The 10 proposed benchmarks included parental leave of one year at 50 per cent or more of salary, a national plan with priority for the disadvantaged, and child poverty rates of less than 10 per cent.

The only benchmark Canada met was that at least 50 per cent of staff in accredited early education services had post-secondary education with relevant qualifications.

"What's happening in Canada didn't surprise us because we know about the inconsistency of care and some of the quality issues and issues around parental leave," UNICEF Canada's Nigel Fisher told CTV's Canada AM on Thursday.

"I think what did surprise us is the comparison, to find we were last."

Fisher said most children are in "unregulated and unaccredited care" so officials can't measure the standards.

"Number one is we need to set standards across the country, those standards need to relate to the training of care-givers," he said.

"There are also issues around access for the poorest people because we know that care can really make a difference to kids coming from at risk families later down the line in terms of their learning and earning power."

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