

Women's support, women's work: Child care in an era of deficit reduction, devolution, downsizing and deregulation ^[1]

Le soutien aux femmes, le travail des femmes et la garde d'enfants à l'ère de la réduction du déficit, du transfert des responsabilités, de la réduction de la taille de l'état et de la déréglementation

Author: Doherty, G., Friendly, M., & Oloman, M.

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Abstract

Among the multiplicity of objectives that high quality childcare can meet is the pivotal goal of promoting equality for women. Child care has consequences for women both as mothers and as providers of care for other people's children. Thus, women have a powerful stake in child care policy. Canada has no national child care policy, and its child care situation has never begun to approach adequacy. In the 1990s, however, federal funding reductions and withdrawal from the social policy field, coupled with provincial downsizing have induced a new child care crisis. The predicament in which the block-funded Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), implemented in 1966, places child care reflects the poor standing of child care in Canadian social policy. Child care has no "home" and its dwindling, mostly market-oriented funding arrangements ensure that even existing services are plagued with ever increasing fragility. Yet Canada as a nation has a growing number of sectors that identify high quality, reliable child care/early childhood development services as essential for their own agendas: National reports, such as that of the National Forum on Health, cite the importance of child care; national commitments, such as the Child Tax Benefit, plus a variety of international obligations and covenants, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Nairobi Forward looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, all need child care in order to be effective. This report [in English- and French-language versions] identifies what has been happening in child care over the last decade, describes policy options for the commencement of Canada's long-recommended national child care policy, and suggests that a successful resolution to the child care dilemma would serve as a good test for assessing the effectiveness of the new social union.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: gender equality ^[4]

mothers ^[5]

national child care ^[6]

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