

Citizen engagement in child care policy: Examining child care policy problematisations in Canadian newspaper articles from 2008 to 2015 ^[1]

Author: Richardson, B., & Langford, R.

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Abstract

Canada has a long way to go to meet its international obligation to ensure all families and young children have access to affordable, high-quality childcare services. While Canada is a federated country where responsibility for childcare services formally falls within provincial and territorial jurisdiction, there is widespread consensus from childcare advocates and policy researchers that to address the 'consistently inconsistent' patchwork of childcare services across the country the federal government must play a key leadership and funding role. This chapter specifically examines how the childcare policy 'problem' was conceptualised and publicly discussed in three Canadian newspapers available online from 2008 to 2015. The fundamental question this chapter answers is: What childcare policy problematisations emerged/did not emerge in the Canadian media prior to and during the 2015 federal election and how might this impact citizens' ability to engage with childcare policy? Drawing on the theoretical foundations of a 'caring democracy', we propose that all citizens including parents, advocates, children and the media have a responsibility to expand the terms of engagement with childcare policies. This chapter draws attention to the important role that the media plays in representing the childcare policy problem and solution – particularly during an election when childcare emerged in the political consciousness of the nation. That a very narrow understanding of the issue was available through media sources to citizens on which to base their opinion and vote is problematised in a context where the provision and accessibility of quality childcare remains poor and overwhelmingly dependent on market mechanisms. It became apparent that parents, as well as citizens more broadly, simply do not have the opportunity to engage with childcare policy in a diverse, nuanced and meaningful way.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 8 Nov 2024): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/11/citizen-engagement-child-care-policy-examining-child-care>

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/24/11/citizen-engagement-child-care-policy-examining-child-care> ^[2]

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