

Why women still ain't satisfied ^[1]

Politics and activism in Canadian child care, 2006

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It's now 35 years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women first recommended a National Day Care Act(1970) and more than 20 years after Judge Rosalie Abella called child care "the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers" (Royal Commission on Equality in Employment). Sixty years have passed since women organized to fight closure of Toronto's wartime day nurseries (Prentice 1996) and more than two decades since the inspired day care activism of the 1970s and 1980s put child care on Canada's political map to stay (Rebick).

Yet Canada has not achieved the "free, non-compulsory, publicly-funded, non-profit, 24-hour national day care system" promoted by Toronto's Action Day Care in the 1970s and 1980s. Indeed, although in most modern countries the idea that high quality child care and early childhood education are synonymous and a benefit to young children is well accepted (OECD 2006; UNESCO), the very idea of early learning and child care is under attack by the religious right in Canada (McDonald) and by the federal government. In the words of the Honourable Diane Finley, Federal minister responsible for child care: "There have been many studies that show that the best people to raise children are the parents" (CTV News).

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