

Providing proper child care is not so simple [AU] ^[1]

Letters, The Sydney Morning Herald

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See text below.

Re: A child-care lesson from Canada

EXCERPTS

Steve Biddulph's article ("A child-care lesson from Canada", January 19-20) is wrong and right. His use of child care in Quebec to declare universal quality child care a "disaster" is a straw man, based on a study which disregarded that more than 70 per cent of Quebec's children were not in child-care centres.

In 1998 Quebec sought universal child care but a change in government slowed expansion and quality improvements, and encouraged for-profit provision. Today, Quebec child care is far from universal, quality is uneven and for-profits show poorer quality.

Biddulph is correct that Canadian advocates are "horrified" by the arrival of Australia's global brand of rapacious corporate child care and allowing for-profits to gobble up public child-care dollars is terrible policy, mitigating against quality, accessibility, equity, choice and democratic participation.

Biddulph is right about the importance of parental leave but wrong not to recognise leave and child care as complementary. Canada's year of paid leave doesn't mean that child care isn't essential for under-threes. He's also wrong that Sweden's exemplary parental leave policy has caused participation by older infants and toddlers to "almost disappear" - it is, instead, increasing.

Families need well-paid parental leave and child care, which is beneficial for children, as long as it is of high quality.

- reprinted from The Sydney Morning Herald

Related link: News: A child-care lesson from Canada ^[2]

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