

# Tories flunk early childhood education test [CA]<sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

It's bitter irony. The same month Ottawa issued its final cheques to the provinces for the Liberals' brief but historic national child care and early learning program, Canada was ranked dead last among industrialized countries in its spending on early childhood education.

Stimulated by their social conservative base, Stephen Harper's Conservatives scrapped the \$5 billion initiative, vitiating nearly 40 years of hard work and struggle by parents and national social policy agencies.

They replaced it with a pared-down "Father Knows Best" \$2.5 billion plan which sends \$100 a month taxable cheques to parents of children under six and sets aside \$250 million over five years for the provinces to spend as they wish on whatever they think constitutes child care.

...

Early Years Study 2: Putting Science Into Action, by internationally renowned child development expert Dr. Fraser Mustard, Margaret Norrie McCain and Stuart Shanker of York University, is a 185-page follow-up report to the groundbreaking 1999 Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain commissioned by the former Ontario government.

...

To replace Canada's current nationwide "chaotic mess" of programs and assistance, the report calls for a system of community hubs, ideally located in schools, that would offer child care, play-based preschool activities, help for parents and social service referrals.

Were Canada prepared to spend just one per cent of its GDP on child care, it would have \$10 billion annually, double the Liberals' nascent national program and quadruple what the Conservatives are delivering with their so-called "Choice in Child Care" scheme that, as one commentator points out, delivers neither choice nor child care.

...

Canada can't afford to spend \$10 billion on its children? As its health and justice costs mount, Canada can't afford not to.

- reprinted from the Winnipeg Free Press

**Region:** Canada<sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** funding<sup>[3]</sup>

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