

Liberals rethinking child care: Party denies it will kill Tory program if in power [CA] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Federal Liberals are attempting to revamp the party's child-care policy in a bid to blunt charges they would cancel the universal child-care allowance of \$100 a month if they were returned to power.

MP Ruby Dhalla, the party's child-care critic, says Liberals are fed up with Conservatives telling voters that a government led by Stephane Dion would kill the program.

"The leader has not said at all that the \$1,200 [a year] now being given to parents would be taken away," said Ms. Dhalla, MP for the riding of Brampton- Springdale.

"We don't want to take it away. But how that \$100 is going to be utilized, that's being determined right now."

She said MPs and party officials are on the verge of finalizing a policy that will provide parents with a better benefit than the taxable Tory allowance, and also create more quality childcare spaces than the Conservatives promise.

The Liberals are looking at a benefit that would "definitely be non-taxable," Ms. Dhalla said in an interview.

One idea being discussed is boosting payments under the Child Tax Benefit, a tax-free monthly payment made to eligible families to help them with the cost of raising children under the age of 18.

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Ms. Dhalla says the Liberals also are tweaking a \$5-billion, five-year national early learning and child-care program initiated under the former government of Paul Martin.

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- reprinted from the National Post

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