

Why the delay in announcing good news? [CA-PE] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Amid the cheering that accompanied the provincial government's announcement this week of support for early childhood education, there was an unwelcome guest - the calendar.

The provincial government invested some \$4.2 million in grants aimed at reducing charges and improving quality at the Island's early child-care centres. The money will help subsidize care for children of low-and-middle-income families; further it will eliminate some of the inequities in the granting of supports to centres. Where 39 child-care programs had been receiving grants, some for as long as 15 years, there will now be 115 eligible for support that ranges between \$475 and \$14,500 depending on the facility.

Broadening assistance and clearing up inequity in child care is a solid idea. It should be a solid idea - after all, the provincial government has been sitting on some of these federal dollars for two years.

It finally decided the time was right this spring - the spring of a year in which Premier Pat Binns has said he will call an election. Some politicians not currently enjoying the burden of power suggested the election timing and the announcement timing may be related. Surely this isn't so.

It does make us wonder, though.

We wonder why the Binns government took so long to decide how to invest early childhood grants that it had received from federal governments of both the Liberal and Conservative persuasions. The money stems from a November 2005 deal that was inked when Ken Dryden was the federal minister of Social Development and Chester Gillan, P.E.I.'s minister of Social Services and Seniors, was sounding eager to help Dryden spend his money.

Progress may have been interrupted by the change of power in Ottawa; but there's no question that Gillan and Binns have held onto this money for too long.

...

We'd like to think our provincial government was not so crass as to delay educational improvement in order to make them fit a political agenda. One party's political fortunes don't matter half as much as the quality of education for our children.

- reprinted from the Charlottetown Guardian

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