

## Editorial: Harper's dubious child-care panel [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

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### AVAILABILITY

See text below.

### EXCERPTS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has strong ideas on child care. He does not see the need for a national child-care plan that meets the needs of all families. And an advisory committee the government has just appointed to provide advice is not likely to contradict him.

Most of the members of the nine-person committee named this week by Human Resources Minister Diane Finley already are on record as supporting the Conservative proposal to give parents \$1,200 a year for each child under the age of 6, instead of honouring the previous Liberal government promise of \$5 billion over five years to create 100,000 new public, not-for-profit child-care spaces in a national program.

The new committee is chaired by Gordon Chong, a former Toronto city councillor and ex-chairman of GO Transit, who has said publicly that he supports Harper's approach because it provides "choices" for families.

Other members include a private child-care operator; the president of a support group for stay-at-home mothers that rallied against the Liberal daycare strategy; the head of a right-wing think-tank; and, oddly, the head of a company that develops computer programming for prison systems.

Just two committee members represent the non-profit sector.

And while community organizations and municipal governments operate fully 70 per cent of all child-care spaces across Canada, none is represented on the advisory panel.

The Tories promise "choice." But the fact is that most working families do not have much choice at all. At present, regulated child care meets the needs of only one in six children under the age of 12.

...

The committee's makeup confirms that the Harper government is not interested in working with the provinces to create new, regulated, sustainable child-care spaces. If it were, the committee would be more balanced, with more input from municipal and community actors, the not-for-profit sector and working families.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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**PRESS RELEASE:** Minister Finley announces creation of Ministerial Advisory Committee on the Child Care Spaces Initiative <sup>[2]</sup>

**Region:** Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

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