

# Forget universal child care, report urges; At-risk preschoolers need money most, governments told [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

The federal and provincial governments should use their spending powers on early-childhood education programs for at-risk preschoolers instead of being fixated on launching universal child care, according to a report released yesterday.

Adding fuel to the heated debate over universal child care, the C. D. Howe Institute report found that while regulated preschool programs help children from low-income and single-parent families prepare for formal schooling, the benefits for children in middle-class homes are "doubtful."

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The authors make three recommendations:

The provinces should provide access to quality child-care programs for children from low-income families to prepare them for schooling.

Child-care centres should be in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of disadvantaged families.

Families eligible for the subsidy should be able to choose whether to place their children in approved for-profit firms or licensed centres operated by charitable, religious or non-profit societies.

Martha Friendly, co-ordinator of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit of the University of Toronto, and widely respected for her work in early-childhood education, said that although she agrees with the report on the creation of regulated child care, it should be universal rather than targeted.

Middle-income families can't necessarily afford quality child care, and "it's not only poor kids for whom it makes a difference," she argued.

Research shows that low- and middle-income children in quality preschool programs benefit socially and cognitively, Friendly said.

She said that within a universally funded system, there are all sorts of things Ottawa and the provinces can do to make the program accessible and, at the same time, help children with certain needs get ready for school.

- reprinted from the Globe and Mail

**Related link:** C.D Howe report: "Let's walk before we run: Cautionary advice on childcare" <sup>[2]</sup>

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

**Tags:** subsidy <sup>[4]</sup>

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**Links**

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/06/08/forget-universal-child-care-report-urges-risk-preschoolers-need> <sup>[2]</sup>

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