

The Canadian workforce requires regulated child care [CA] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

I have been following the exchange of opinions on child-care funding and I think I've just about had enough. I was one of the delegates who spoke at the regional council meeting on June 28 and I applaud council for continuing to lead the way in child care.

An important point brought forward by one councillor during the debate was that services for children are often emotional issues and we should now take some emotion out to have a proper discussion. I will follow his advice in this column.

We have heard a lot about life choices recently but remember that, sometimes, choices are made for us due to unforeseen circumstances. There are also professions where one cannot afford, or is not expected, to take several years off to raise a family.

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Without working women, my Grade 1 daughter would not receive an education until Grade 7 at her present school. Today, my husband would have not been able to take the bus to work, my son would not have seen the doctor nor got his prescription filled and I could not have bought groceries. Forty-six per cent of the Canadian workforce is made up of women: We need these working women to be our doctors, painters, nurses, technicians, teachers; we need them in all professions. Both working mothers and stay-at-home mothers contribute to society in their own way and we need them both just as much. Some women may also feel more fulfilled in one role than the other. Women should not be judged for the choices they make for their families but for the contributions they make to society.

So let's stop arguing about working women and their choices. The reality is that we have working families and working single parents, and our society needs them to work. What kind of care do we, as a society, provide for our children so that we have a productive workforce rather than parents worrying about their children? And how do we, as a society, fund it? This is a 21st-century problem and it is not going to go away.

Some people say that the Conservatives think that home is better for the children. Imagine the reduction in the workforce if all our small children stayed at home with one of their parents. With \$1,200 per child yearly instead of a second salary, we would also see a serious reduction in our spending power and hence our economy would suffer. If Harper is serious about the home being best for children, he should realize that stay-at-home parents deserve to earn more than 1,200 taxable dollars a year.

The federal Conservative plan for families also fails to create spaces that are desperately needed to reduce the ever-increasing waiting lists in licensed day cares. Due to the shortage of infant spaces (four to 18 months), the wait for licensed day care in Kitchener and Waterloo is up to 18 months. In the absence of capital funding, will tax incentives for industry to create child-care spaces help? I don't think so.

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- reprinted from the Record

Region: Canada ^[2]

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mother's labour force participation ^[5]

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