

# Daycare activists have to adapt [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Goar, Carol

**Source:** Toronto Star

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 1 May 2006

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

One of the hardest lessons child-care advocates have learned &mdash; and relearned &mdash; in their 30-year campaign for a universal preschool system is that when the political winds turn against them, they have to tack.

Zigzagging into a headwind is slow, exhausting work. Sometimes the goal doesn't seem to be getting any closer.

But compared with the alternatives &mdash; standing still, slipping back or capsizing &mdash; it's not a bad choice.

...

Tomorrow's budget is likely to confirm what Prime Minister Stephen Harper has been saying for the past five months: The Conservatives will cancel the national child-care program put in place by the previous Liberal government. Effective next spring, the funding promised to the provinces under a five-year, \$5 billion deal will be cut off.

...

Child-care advocates have accused him of betrayal. They have denounced him for putting the well-being of Canada's next generation at risk. They have released studies showing how regressive his proposal is. They have appealed to him to honour the Liberal commitment, while proceeding with his family allowances.

Tomorrow, they'll see what effect their lobbying has had. Barring a major surprise, they'll end the day in tears.

Then they'll have to figure out how to advance their cause.

They can keep railing against Harper in the hope that voters will defeat the Conservatives in the next election. But that didn't do them much good in the last campaign. Moreover, it's unlikely to be effective outside Liberal strongholds such as Toronto.

...

Or they can zigzag, catching the wind at oblique angles.

One way of doing that would be to turn their sights to Queen's Park. Premier Dalton McGuinty has faced very little criticism for falling far short of his pledge to create 25,000 new child-care spaces. Almost no one is questioning his contention that Harper's decision to cancel the Liberal funding deal has pushed the goal out of reach.

But Ontario's own finances are healthy. Other provinces, notably Quebec, have pressed forward on their own. And McGuinty professes to believe that preschool learning is one of the smartest investments a government can make.

A second possibility would be to capitalize on Harper's undertaking to fix the fiscal imbalance between Ottawa and the provinces. If he agrees to allocate a larger share of each tax dollar to Ontario, some of that money could be put toward child care.

...

None of this comes close to what child-care advocates really want.

But until the winds change, their task is to make progress any way they can.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** budget <sup>[3]</sup>

advocacy <sup>[4]</sup>

federal programs <sup>[5]</sup>

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/06/05/daycare-activists-have-adapt-ca> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/budget> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/advocacy> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs>