

Educators unite against daycare promise [CA]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Ontario public school boards and teachers' unions are uniting their expertise against Prime Minister Stephen Harper's plan to put child care dollars directly into parents' pockets rather than public daycare.

School officials and teachers say the Conservative promise to give \$1,200 a year to parents flies in the face of research showing children are measurably better prepared for school when they've attended quality daycares.

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The coalition is also enlisting support from the Canadian School Boards' Association, municipalities and other children's advocates.

On Tuesday in Burnaby, B.C., Harper restated his commitment to the plan he says gives parents more choice. The Conservative child-care policy is expected to cost Ontario \$1.4 billion or 11,000 daycare spaces, according to last month's provincial budget.

"The implications of not having these sites, which is where this is going, means lives are being impacted," said Peel District School Board Education Director Jim Grieve, who has helped spearhead a "Success by 6" program aimed at bolstering developmental programs for young children.

In some areas of Peel up to 30 per cent of children aren't ready to learn to read when they get to Grade 1, research shows. Grieve has written Harper asking that he reconsider the policy.

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- reprinted from the Toronto Star

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<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7856> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/advocacy> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federalism> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/spaces> [8]

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