

Last chance for day care [CA-ON]^[1]

Editorial

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EXCERPTS

In 1993 and in every general election since, the federal Liberals promised to build a national child-care program. It wasn't until staring extinction in the face in 2006, however, that they decided to follow through. So, it's more than a little galling to hear the bleating of Liberals today as they implore the Conservative government to honour the agreements negotiated between the federal and provincial governments in Paul Martin's last days as prime minister. Had the Liberals kept their promise in their 13 years in office, it wouldn't be an issue today.

But they didn't, and it is. And so, with this proviso out of the way, we join the Liberals and child-care advocates across the country in imploring the Tories not to be so hasty. Canada needs more quality child-care spaces, and the Tories would be well served to reconsider the issue.

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The Tories promised to scrap the Liberal child-care agreements negotiated with the provinces and instead make direct taxable payments to parents of \$1,200 for each pre-schooler in the family to spend as they see fit.

The Tories also offered tax credits worth \$250 million a year to encourage businesses to work with community groups to create up to 125,000 new spaces nationwide. The businesses would get a \$10,000 tax credit for each space created.

To be sure, the \$1,200 is a piddly amount for parents.

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At issue, however, is not the size of the benefit, but rather its effectiveness. The key to a successful plan is ensuring enough child-care spaces are created and that they are accessible to the families who need them.

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Most Canadians did not vote for Harper and aren't expecting him to keep his promise. After waiting 13 years, it's a shame to deny Canadians the child-care program they have been expecting.

- reprinted from the Sudbury Star

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