

Families want national daycare: Report [CA]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Canadian families, irrespective of where they live or the size of their communities, want their child-care needs met by a nationally funded public system and not a federal cash payout, says a report prepared by YWCA Canada.

The YWCA commissioned four community task forces from fall 2004 to fall 2005 to address how local resources could be organized to strengthen child care and create a viable model for service delivery.

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"In all four communities it was never suggested as a possibility that money to parents would build a system," said study director Jenny Robinson.

"All of the communities consistently said that they wanted integrated services and they want it publicly funded and fairly funded so that they could meet the demands of parents in their communities. What we find is that if parents have money to buy services, there are still no services to buy, so we need to build a system," she said.

The federal Conservative government angered many child-care advocates by announcing last month that it will keep a campaign promise and scrap the national child-care program set up by their Liberal predecessors.

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Robinson said the payment would amount to only \$8 a week for a middle-income family once it is taxed, which she said is inadequate to meet basic child-care needs.

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The YWCA study, released today, was inspired by a September 2003 report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development that described Canada's early childhood services as "fragile," "under-resourced" and a "patchwork."

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The four task forces each developed similar so-called hub models, calling for a single place in the community where families could not just find child care but a host of other child-oriented services, including pre- and post-natal care, early detection for disabilities and nutritional programs.

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Among the report's recommendations are:

- Adequate government funding to ensure delivery of high-quality care.
- Legislation to ensure child-care services are of high quality and inclusive of all children, regardless of socio-economic status, location, language or culture.
- Replace child-care fee subsidies for parents in favour of adequate and stable base funding for programs.

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- reprinted from The Star

Region: Canada^[2]

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