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Author: Canadian Press Source: Canadian Press Format: Video Publication Date: 8 Mar 2006

AVAILABILITY See text below.

EXCERPTS

Women's groups are urging Prime Minister Stephen Harper to change his mind on child care. They marked International Women's Day on Wednesday with meetings, demonstrations and news conferences urging the federal government to retain the child-care agreements signed with the provinces by the last Liberal government.

They say Harper's pledge to replace those agreements with direct payments to families of \$1,200 a year for every child under 6 doesn't cut it.

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"For working women, child care is all about equality," said Barbara Byers, executive vice-president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

She said Harper's promised child-care money falls far short of what is needed: "Help with diapers maybe, but not child care."

Byers said women will fight for their right to accessible and affordable care.

"This government has its focus on the family all wrong," said Byers.

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