

# Long-term vision for quality child care worth preserving: women's council [CA-NL] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

The Bay St. George Status of Women Council is urging the provincial government to continue its support for the 2005 Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) agreement-in-principle.

The women's council said this is an agreement which builds on the 2003 multilateral framework, focuses on young children six and under and their families; supports parents for employment/training; and creates opportunities for optimum child development.

"Making sure that our youngest citizens get the best start in life is one of the most important priorities for parents and families in our province," said Premier Danny Williams said at the time. "This agreement signed today will help Newfoundland and Labrador achieve its long-term vision to ensure children and families have access to a quality, early learning and child care system and that early child care educators and providers receive training and supports they need."

The council said this statement was made by Premier Williams on May 13, 2005, the day the historic ELCC agreement-in-principle was signed between the federal and provincial governments.

Council members feel this is an agreement which supports the development of quality early learning and child care opportunities for young children and families throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

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"My government firmly believes economic and social policy go hand- in-hand. Sound social initiatives promote economic growth," states Premier Williams in the provincial government's document, Reducing Poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador: Working Towards a Solution.

The women's council said the development of the ELCC agreement involved many years of early years research, consultations with stakeholders, negotiations with the federal government and a substantial investment of human resources, time and money.

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The women's council said on Feb. 20 of this year Health Minister John Ottenheimer stated that this province is open to working with the federal government on its new plan for child care - whatever direction it takes with child care.

The women's council said the majority of parents in this province do not have access to regulated care and in rural areas, such as southwestern Newfoundland, only 2.3 per cent of young children and their families have access to regulated early learning and child care.

Lack of affordable and accessible quality child care has been identified as the number one systemic barrier to women's participation in the workforce.

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The women's council is urging Premier Williams and Ottenheimer to continue to support and advocate for the ELCC agreement-in-principle signed on May 13, 2005.

The Bay St. George Status of Women Council will be contacting local MHAs Jim Hodder in Port au Port, and Joan Burke, who represents St. George's-Stephenville East and is also minister responsible for the Status of Women, as well as Ottenheimer and Premier Williams to discuss the child care issues for the region.

They are also asking that this province add its voice to the others who do not support the federal government's decision to rip up the bilateral agreements signed with the majority of the provinces.

- reprinted from the Western Star

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

Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

Tags: advocacy <sup>[4]</sup>

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