

# Child care at risk [CA] <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

From subsidized day cares and private preschools to the parents and children who rely on their services, a national non-profit group says that "the whole child-care system is at risk."

The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada says that if the new federal government's plan is implemented, Nova Scotia could lose an estimated 7,167 funded child-care spaces or about \$43 million annually.

"We're talking about should we have a system or should we not have a (child-care) system," Monica Lysack, the group's executive director, said last Friday. "There's a public good that's being sacrificed here."

On Monday, his first official day as prime minister, Stephen Harper confirmed he will put before Parliament this spring his plan to provide a \$1,200 annual taxable allowance for each child under age six. The Conservatives also intend to provide \$250 million in tax credits to help employers and non-profit agencies create new spaces.

The child-care funding deals reached between the provinces and the former prime minister, Paul Martin, will be axed. These agreements will be phased out by March 31, 2007, a government representative said Tuesday.

The federal government signed official agreements with Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario, and agreements in principle were signed with seven other provinces, including Nova Scotia. Mr. Martin and Premier John Hamm signed the \$137.3-million deal in May 2005.

The Canadian Press reported that the prime minister has offered to talk about a "transition period" with Quebec Premier Jean Charest, who said Tuesday he wants to negotiate to keep the five-year deal.

Ms. Lysack said her group doesn't "dispute that families need income support, but that's not child care."

She pointed out that the allowance amounts to as little as a few dollars per day for some families.

"Everybody should be concerned about this. . . . If there is some suggestion that \$1 a day or even \$3 a day is an adequate recognition of caring for young children . . . that's insulting."

Community Services Minister David Morse wasn't clear on whether he would fight to get the other four years of funding that had been agreed upon and noted he may not be the minister much longer.

Barbara Findlay, director of Happy Hollow Preschool in north-end Halifax, said her private centre isn't directly affected by the loss of funded spaces outlined in the Child Care Advocacy Association's numbers.

But she said private centres will lose out through cuts to federal funding that could have been used to boost wages, pay for staff training and cover other operating costs.

"If the funding is cut, there's a whole huge segment of our population that is not going to have access to good-quality child care," she said late last week. "It affects us all in the long run."

- reprinted from the Halifax Herald

**Region:** Nova Scotia <sup>[2]</sup>

Canada <sup>[3]</sup>

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

funding <sup>[5]</sup>

federalism <sup>[6]</sup>

federal programs <sup>[7]</sup>

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/06/02/child-care-risk-ca> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7853> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [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/federal-programs>