

Parents wonder about Ottawa's day care plans [CA-NB] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

With Prime Minister Stephen Harper about to be sworn into office in Ottawa, many New Brunswick parents are confused about the new government's plans for day care.

One of the clear differences between the Liberals and Conservatives in their election platforms was on the issue of day care. Key to the Conservative promise was to give \$100 dollars a month for child care to parents of young children. The Liberals wanted to pour money into day cares and pre-schools across the country, creating more subsidized spaces and boosting pay scales for the people who work there.

On election night, Harper promised to move ahead with his party's agenda for change.

But with the Conservatives holding a minority in Parliament, with no natural allies, it's not certain what, if anything, will happen to help parents and day cares across Canada.

Fredericton mother Maria Briand is a mother of two children. Briand raises her children at home, and works nights part time. She can't afford to work fulltime, and have her children in day care.

"I would welcome an extra \$200 to take care of my kids, \$100 each per child. It would be nice to be able to afford to put her in a paid program."

But Mary-Ruth Magee has misgivings about the program, and what it would mean for her daughter. Magee's daughter Jenna is almost four, and goes to day care. She says she'd rather see the money from this allowance go directly into programs across the country. "I feel better knowing the day care is being covered, I don't have to plan it into my budget, emergencies cannot touch her care."

Magee says she has other reasons to be concerned about her daughter's day care. She qualifies for a federal program that covers her daughter's day care two days a week, until she's old enough to go to school in the fall of 2007. She's now worried that the change of government means her subsidy could run out in August.

- reprinted from CBC News, New Brunswick

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