

Question of the day: On child care [CA] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Dr. Jean Clinton, child psychiatrist, community advocate for children's issues, asks:

"What will your party do to ensure that parents get the support they need, including high-quality child care, to get our children off to the best start and protect our future as a prosperous nation?"

CANDIDATES FOR HAMILTON EAST STONEY CREEK:

Wayne Marston, NDP:

"The NDP believe that our children are our future. We commit to provide licensed, not-for-profit, high-quality child care. Our proposed child-care act will provide \$1.8 billion in the first year, increased by \$250 million over the following three years. We will also increase the federal child tax credit to \$1,000 over four years to assist lower-income families.

"In 1993, the Liberals' Red Book offered us a national child-care program. In 2005, they again offered it, but they have broken their promises to our children. The Conservative tax breaks won't create child-care spaces. It's time to build a real national child-care system."

Jo Pavlov, Green party:

"Our party would remove the GST on education supplies and specific family products and expand child tax credits and benefits. We also plan to create tax incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site child care, including implementing a managed reduction in the standard work week to 35 work hours per week.

"We also support a nationwide healthy lunch and snacks program, from kindergarten through to Grade 12. We'll boost funding for early-childhood education and work with other governments to link local child care and education centres into a national network. We will support child-focused programs that boost self-confidence."

Frank Rukavina, Conservative:

"There are thousands of young children in Hamilton and Stoney Creek whose families face challenges in finding child care to balance work and family. After 12 years, the Liberals have proven they don't want to help. That's why a Conservative government will introduce a family support policy that gives parents true choice in child care.

"We will give families a \$1,200 per year child-care allowance for each child under six. Our plan will let parents choose the child-care option that best suits them. The bottom line is, when it comes to child care, Conservatives trust parents to make the best choices for their family."

Tony Valeri, Liberal (incumbent)

"I share Dr. Clinton's vision of a country responsible for development of its children. Her pioneering work shows children benefit from a national effort to provide an enriched early-learning environment during their formative years. The Liberal government signed agreements with the provinces and committed \$11 billion to an early-learning/child-care strategy.

"The Conservatives would terminate these agreements and offer parents \$25 a week per family, per child. That money would do some good. But you can't call it a national early-learning/child-care strategy. It won't meet the needs of families, our children and our country."

- reprinted from the Hamilton Spectator

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