

# Child care advocates want \$10-billion a year program [CA]<sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Philp, Margaret

**Source:** Globe and Mail

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 1 Nov 2004

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

Child care advocates are calling on Ottawa to fund a national system of early learning and care that would grow to reach about \$10-billion a year.

In a report to be released Tuesday as social services ministers meet behind closed doors to hammer out a deal, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada calls for public funding for a system that would grow over the next 15 years to reach one per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.

Canada currently spends about 0.2 per cent of GDP on educating its youngest children through government child care subsidies and kindergarten in public schools - less than half the level of funding in other industrialized nations and a fraction of the six per cent of the country's total wealth devoted to public education in Canada.

The report sets out a schedule for expanding child care services by the end of 15 years, to cover all children six years old and younger, with the federal government picking up most of the tab for opening new early learning programs, the provinces on the hook for training early childhood educators, and parents covering 20 per cent of the cost through fees.

In the first five years, half of the staff working with children would hold a provincial child development certificate, with the percentage rising to 70 per cent after 10 years and 100 per cent after 15 years.

While the federal Liberals pledged \$5-billion over the next five years to fund a system of early childhood education in Canada, the report calls for public funding to rise to \$8-billion a year after 10 years and to \$10-billion after 15 years. The current tax deduction for child care - a sparsely used program that costs Ottawa \$5.7-million a year - would be phased out.

In calculating the costs of the system, the advocacy association assumes that a full-time child care space costs \$10,000 a year; child care workers would earn \$36,000 in salary and benefits; and there would be a ratio of staff to children of one to six.

According to a recent OECD report that slammed Canada for its underfunded and mediocre child care system, the country spends an average of \$386 for every child 0 to 12 in child care, compared with \$15,000 for every university student.

Along with the massive jump in public funding would be federal legislation that would include standards, conditions for funding, timelines for improvements, and accountability mechanisms requiring provinces and territories to report on their progress annually to Parliament, their own legislatures, and the public.

"We want to move away from the user-fee, subsidy-based way of supporting childcare services Today towards a publicly funded, publicly accountable service, and we think that this report points us in that direction with the legislation and an outline of the dollars it will take," Ms. Bird said.

The report also calls for more generous family leave policies in Canada - expanding the year-long parental leave to cover parents who are self-employed or enrolled in school and increasing benefits to 75 per cent of a parent's lost income.

- reprinted from the Globe and Mail

**Related link:** From patchwork to framework: A child care strategy for Canada<sup>[2]</sup>

**Region:** Canada<sup>[3]</sup>

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

funding<sup>[5]</sup>

legislation and regulation<sup>[6]</sup>

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

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/04/11/child-care-advocates-want-10-billion-year-program-ca> [2]  
<https://childcarecanada.org/documents/online-documents/04/11/patchwork-framework-child-care-strategy-canada> [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/legislation-and-regulation> [7]  
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs>