

# Stop tossing cash at 'bad' child care system: analyst <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

A new international report that characterizes much of Canada's child care system as expensive, glorified babysitting should be a wake-up call to stop pumping money into bad programs, a leading children's expert says.

Martha Friendly, an analyst at the University of Toronto, says the report by the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development paints an accurate picture of the patchwork quilt of programs that have failed Canada's pre-schoolers.

"People do not want to keep throwing money at this bad system," Ms. Friendly, co-ordinator of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit at the university, said in an interview. "It's time to act. We need an action plan."

Social Development Minister Ken Dryden says the report should fuel the effort to build a national child care system, something he says he wants to push when he meets his provincial and territorial counterparts in Ottawa next week.

Mr. Dryden said he hopes new money can start flowing in the expected February budget if the federal government and the provinces and territories reach an agreement in the coming weeks.

Likening the current child care system to where the education system was 100 years ago, and where the health-care system was four decades ago, Mr. Dryden urged patience and said the vision of a complete system will eventually be achieved.

Ms. Friendly said the provinces and territories should be pushed to provide a coherent three-year plan for creating affordable, regulated spaces with educational components before they get any federal money.

"Each province should have clearly set out goals, targets, timetables, responsibilities," she said.

"On the one hand, there needs to be much more money. On the other, there needs to be essentially much more policy."

- reprinted from the Ottawa Citizen

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