

Most Canadians favour national child care: Poll [CA]^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Canadians are high on their kids, and new poll results reveal that they think the federal government should be too.

The poll, by the Canadian Child Care Federation and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, found 90 per cent of Canadians agree with the statement that "Canada should have a nationally co-ordinated child care plan."

The random poll of 1,200 Canadians was conducted in early December of last year by Millward Brown Goldfarb, and the results, said Sandra Griffin, executive director of the Canadian Child Care Federation, were startling.

The results are considered accurate plus or minus 2.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

"You often see reports in the media of people saying 'I don't support child care and parents should be at home'," said Ms. Griffin. "When these results came in, it was like 'oh my gosh, what you might see in the paper and on TV is not what Canadians think'."

The poll also found 86 per cent of Canadians want "a publicly funded child care system that makes quality child care available to all Canadian children."

It's common to wait up to three years for subsidized child care, said Ms. Griffin. And, at present, such child care programs aren't co-ordinated across the country -- they can vary province to province.

Ms. Griffin says the study shows that "very significant numbers" of Canadians want that to change.

Originally, the survey was not intended to be published. The agencies were researching Canadians beliefs on child care in preparation for a national public awareness campaign.

"We really thought we were going to discover the barriers to a national child care plan," Ms. Griffin said. "But the results were so strong, we had to release them."

Maryann Bird, the executive director of the Child Care Advocacy Association, said Canada has not been keeping up with other developed countries in funding for child care. "Even the U.S. is moving ahead of us on this," she said.

"We see in the news that they are discussing opportunities to co-operate on a national child care study. It's absolutely essential that they do that. These results prove it," Ms. Griffin said.

- reprinted from the Ottawa Citizen

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