

# Strike a deal for Quebec child care, too<sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

There's a rumour I'm starting - you can help spread it - that New Brunswick's next sale to Quebec will be our child care centres.

If New Brunswick parents get as good a deal as our largest companies will be getting from the proposed NB Power deal, then parents will pay just \$7 per day, instead of currently about \$25-\$30, child care workers will get a \$10,000 annual salary increase, and double the number of children will be able to find regulated child care spaces.

But the real reason behind the sale is that New Brunswickers want to stimulate job growth and the economy.

New Brunswick is jealous of the benefits that Quebec is reaping since investing in services to children:

\*School test scores that have gone from among the lowest to the highest;

\*A drop in child poverty rates - parents are able to maintain or increase their participation in the paid labour force. In the long term, children's enhanced development will lead to improved educational outcomes and earnings.

\*A dramatic increase in the percentage of mothers in the workforce, and so,

\*A jump in tax revenue from working mothers - in Quebec, that additional tax revenue reportedly covers 40 per cent of the child care program's cost.

Oh, and a rising birth rate. The dropping birth rate was part of what pushed the Quebec government into action a dozen years ago. The child care program has helped, especially once QuÃ©bec improved its parental leave program to one that would make other Canadian parents weep in envy. The lesson is the same as what other jurisdictions have found: don't make parents - mothers - choose between paid work and children. Make it possible to have both, and they will.

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The provincial government spends less than \$300 per New Brunswick child on regulated child care - half the Canadian average - while Quebec children get almost \$1,700. We invest early in children or we pay much more later.

...

- reprinted from the New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal

**Region:** New Brunswick<sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** affordability<sup>[3]</sup>

funding<sup>[4]</sup>

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