

Opposition parties respond to UNICEF report card ^[1]

NDP and Liberal press releases

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See text below.

New Democrat Olivia Chow to send UNICEF card to Harper to highlight report of Canada missing the mark in childcare. NDP Canada, 11 Dec 08

Canada is failing to meet 9 out of 10 early childhood education and child care benchmarks according to a UNICEF report released today.

"To fall short by one or two percent is one thing, but to miss by ninety percent is absolutely unacceptable," said Chow. "What would you say if your son or daughter came home with a grade of less than ten percent?"

Canada is currently spending less than a third of what UNICEF recommends.

"We are a first world country. Our children deserve first world care and education," said Chow.

While US President elect Barack Obama plans to invest in early childhood education as a means to stimulate the economy, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper refuses to provide any new money for child care.

"Other world leaders understand that our children are our future, they know that we need to invest in our children for long-term economic growth," said Chow. "Harper just doesn't get it."

"The NDP-Liberal Coalition understands that dedicated funding to an early childhood education and child care is critical in a holistic plan for economic recovery," said Chow.

"This is why child care is part of the agreement signed by the coalition parties."

Chow will be buying an UNICEF card and sending it to Stephen Harper.

- reprinted from oliviachow.ca

UN report shows Conservatives' failed childcare strategy: Canada ranks last among OECD countries. Liberal Party of Canada, 11 Dec 08

A United Nations report card on childcare in Canada confirms the Conservatives' decision to cancel the Liberal national childcare plan hurts Canadian families, Liberal Human Resources and Skills Development Critic Mike Savage said today.

"We know that Conservative ideology always trumps good public policy," said Mr. Savage. "This report is a serious indictment of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's lack of vision."

The report released today by UNICEF which ranks early learning and childcare among 25 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, places Canada last among the OECD. The report states OECD countries, on average, spend some 0.7 per cent of GDP on early childhood education. Canada spends just 0.3 per cent of GDP, of which Quebec accounts for the largest portion of that investment.

The last Conservative platform lacked any new commitments for early education and childcare despite the fact the number of new spaces being created is on the decline.

"The Conservatives' failure on childcare is not only hurting Canada's families but it is also making our country less competitive at a time

when we need to make investments in people and stimulate economic growth," said Mr. Savage.

- reprinted from Liberal.ca

Related link: REPORT: The child care transition ^[2]

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