

Federal budget ignores child care yet again ^[1]

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EXCERPTS.

Once again a federal government has failed Canadian families -- particularly women and children -- by refusing to address a national child-care strategy in its budget.

The need to provide affordable daycare across the country is so well documented there is no acceptable argument that can justify the incompetence demonstrated by the government in its refusal to invest in a national program.

The only explanations that don't defy logic are that the average age of a Canadian parliamentarian is over 50, and only 22% of MPs are women. In other words, the country is being run, primarily, by old men who either don't get it or don't care.

The studies supporting rationales for a national childcare plan are so numerous they have become in recent years redundant. How many times can we count the number of child-care spaces, the growing number of women in the work place and post-secondary education or restate the proven benefits of regulated and accessible day care for both children and their working parents?

In the last decade the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development released a report that ranked Canada last among developed countries in terms of access to early learning and child-care spaces -- and last in terms of public investment.

A more recent indictment came just this month from YWCA Canada, which released a study documenting how women have closed the gender gap with men in employment numbers and reversed it in higher education, without any corresponding policy for comprehensive early learning and child-care services.

It's not too great of a stretch to imagine "the old men" like it that way -- with barriers to child care creating an environment where employment inequity for women is a natural force.

Leadership ignores the need for a Canadian child-care strategy at its peril -and at ours.

With almost two-thirds of women with a child under the age of three in the work force and 60 % of university graduates being women, investment in quality affordable childcare is no-brainer financial planning.

Making the workplace more accessible for women with children would directly and positively impact the GDP.

Regardless of age or gender, anyone striking a budget should be able to understand that.

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