

Michael Ignatieff announces Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund ^[1]

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Press release, backgrounder and Q&A ^[2]

Press release:

A Liberal government will strengthen families through a new Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund to give our kids the head start they need, while creating new, affordable child care spaces to give working families choice, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff announced today.

"Families don't have choice in child care when there's a shortage of high-quality, affordable child care spaces," said Mr. Ignatieff at a visit to Lord Roberts Preschool. "Every child deserves the best possible start in life. With the Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund, the Liberal Party is putting equal opportunity back at the centre of Canadian life."

The Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund will start with a \$500-million investment in the first year, rising to \$1 billion annually by the fourth year. Provinces and territories will be able to apply to this new social infrastructure fund for cost-sharing of early childhood learning and care plans that create and operate new, affordable, high-quality early childhood learning and care spaces across Canada with qualified professional staff.

"Our long-term goal is a high-quality, affordable early childhood learning and care space for every Canadian family that wants one," said Mr. Ignatieff. "A federal government cannot do this on its own. That's why we will work in close collaboration with all governments to achieve this."

"Too often, working families are stuck on waiting lists for years before a child care space opens up -- and this fund could make all the difference for them," he added. "Giving our kids the strongest possible start boosts their development throughout childhood and increases their chance of a healthy and successful life."

The Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund will be part of a Liberal government's Canadian Learning Strategy. The Canadian Learning Strategy aims to build the best-educated, most highly-skilled workforce in the world, including investments like the Canadian Learning Passport for higher education, support for Aboriginal learning and expanded language training for new Canadians.

"We can strengthen families -- without raising your taxes -- if we stop corporate giveaways, control wasteful spending, and focus on what really matters: giving every Canadian the tools to succeed."

Region: Canada ^[3]

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