

Federal election 2011: What do the party platforms say? ^[1]

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Below are links to the federal parties' election platforms with excerpts from their ECEC platforms or related family policies where appropriate. Three of the four Canada-wide parties include ECEC commitments in their platforms.

Bloc Quebecois

- Bloc Quebecois platform [link no longer available]

The BQ does not address ECEC in its federal election platform, considering it to be entirely within Quebec jurisdiction.

Conservative Party

- Conservative Party platform [link no longer available]

Excerpts from the Conservative platform:

We established the Universal Child Care Benefit of \$1,200 per year, per child under six years of age, to support all parents and to respect their right to choose the form of child care that's best for their families.

....

We will establish the Family Tax Cut income-sharing for couples with dependent children under 18 years of age.

This will give spouses the choice to share up to \$50,000 of their household income, for federal income-tax purposes. This important new measure will be implemented when the federal budget is balanced within our next full term of office.

The result will be significant tax relief for approximately 1.8 million Canadian families -- each of them saving, on average, \$1,300 per year.

Most of all, it will ensure that the federal income tax system respects and supports the choices that families make.

It will increase fairness for single-income couples. And it will ease the burden on double-income families, by allowing them to keep more of what they earn and to benefit more from having a second income.

Green Party

- Green Party platform [link no longer available]

Excerpts from the Green platform:

Help for married couples and families

- Fix the tax system. Lower income taxes and introduce full income splitting to reduce the tax burden on married couples and families.

- Share the load. More people working fewer hours. For those who want to, make it easier to telecommute or work from home. Share jobs. Flex hours. Flexible child care with access for all. Early childhood education. More workplace child care spaces. Support for those who stay home to raise their children and support for those who need to get back to work while their kids are still young.

Budget

Investment in early childhood education

2011-12: \$500 million

2012-13: \$700 million

2013-14: \$1 billion

Several provinces have gone it alone in designing innovative programs that work for their populations. Quebec has \$7-a-day daycare.

Ontario is moving towards full day kindergarten for 4 and 5 year olds. The GPC would ramp up to \$1 billion a year to support existing and new programs that would be cost shared with the provinces.

Liberal Party

- Liberal Party platform [link no longer available]

Excerpts from the Liberal platform:

Every child in Canada deserves the best possible start in life and a comprehensive approach to learning in Canada must begin with Early Childhood Learning. We've already seen leadership from some provinces, particularly Quebec. But due to the lack of federal leadership,

Canada receives failing grades from international bodies, including the OECD and UNICEF, for having no coordinated, national early childhood learning and care policy. Working parents, amid all their other pressures, often struggle with waiting lists for the limited number of existing spaces. That wait can often last years.

A Liberal government will establish a new Early Childhood Learning and Care Fund that will begin with \$500 million in the first year, rising to an annual commitment of \$1 billion by the fourth year. Administered as a new social infrastructure fund, provinces and territories will be able to apply to the 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 well-trained professional staff.

The long-term goal is a high-quality, affordable early childhood learning and care space for every Canadian family that wants one. But the federal government cannot do this on its own. It will require sustained collaboration among all governments. As implementation of the Fund ramps up joint investment, a Liberal government will also work with other governments on the research, policy development, and sharing of best practices for the system necessary to meet this long-term goal. This plan will support innovation and different approaches at the provincial and community level.

A Liberal government will place Canada on a path of step-by-step, year-by-year progress in improving access to inclusive early childhood learning and care. The result will be higher quality care for Canadian families, less waiting for spaces, and a country with a renewed commitment to the learning and development of our youngest citizens.

New Democratic Party

- NDP platform [link no longer available]

Excerpts from the NPD platform:

We will ensure that new parents who have taken maternity and parental leave are not penalized on Employment Insurance benefits once they return to work.

Improving Access to Child Care

We will work with the provinces and territories to establish and fund a Canada-wide child care and early learning program, enshrined in law, with the following goals:

- The creation of 25,000 new child care spaces per year for the next four years;
- Improvements to community infrastructure to support the growth of child care spaces;
- The creation of integrated, community-based, child-centred early learning and education centres that provide parents with a "one-stop shop" for family services.

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