

# Standing behind a failing system <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

In the last month, as media has focused more and more on problems with the childcare situation in Newfoundland, our government stated there would be a "major" announcement in the 2011 budget concerning child care.

Along with many other parents in this province, I waited with baited breath to hear how the government planned to solve the issues.

"Standing Strong on Childcare," the plan announced on April 19 does anything but stand strong. What it does is stand behind a failing system. It lets down parents, children, and early childhood educators. Instead of taking the initiative and the past three decades of research into quality child care, our government decided to take the easy route, investing more heavily in a system that already doesn't work and will continue to not work.

Our current system doesn't work for parents. The majority of child care spaces in this province are at either for profit centres - recognized worldwide as the lowest quality care available - or at home daycares - known to lack the flexibility and reliability that many parents require.

It doesn't work for children. Study after study has shown that the best outcomes for children in care come about when non-profit, community based centres are used. The best quality care comes about when there is highly paid and trained staff; high staff to child ratios; and small group size. While home daycares can often provide small group size, they fail in the other areas.

This system doesn't work for early childhood educators either. One had hoped our government would invest in a system that provided sustainability, infrastructure, and employment. Just last year they announced increased incentives for early childhood education students, but this year they're trying to put them out of work. Community-based, non-profit centres would've provided new employers for these graduates. Instead our government ascertains that their education is unnecessary, choosing to license home day-care providers who while regulated and in receipt of some training, have nothing near the specialized education of our early childhood education graduates.

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Several years ago, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit provided a framework for improving Canadian child care. These suggested changes have been acclaimed by the international child care community and are well-known guidelines for governments worldwide. I refuse to believe that our provincial government was unaware of the suggestions.

The Childcare Resource and Research Unit stated unequivocally that as a long-term goal, child care in Canada should be delivered through non-profit services. Among their suggestions for how to undertake this shift, they stated that new funding should be directed to non-profit services only, that funding and assistance to convert to non-profit services should be established, and that responsibility for child care should be shifted to a public service, such as education.

Our provincial government has clearly chosen to ignore the evidence and internationally approved suggestions of quality researchers here in Canada. They've chosen to ignore the needs of parents, the state of our children, and the well being of our workers.

Our provincial budget has been announced, but at least we still have the federal election next week to make our voices heard. Please don't put your support behind a party that will make the same mistakes our provincial Progressive Conservatives have.

Don't stand behind a failing system, but use your vote to encourage change.

-reprinted from the Western Star

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[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/05/standing-behind-failing-system> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/online-documents/11/04/newfoundland-and-labrador-budget-2011-standing-strong> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7851> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/budget> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-development> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/election> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/privatization>