

# Child care takes centre stage <sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

A 37-year veteran of the child-care industry went to bat for families at an all candidates' debate held at the West Ridge Early Education Centre Tuesday night.

Despite the moderator's attempt to halt her, centre director Lucille Desjardins took centre stage in an attempt to get all five North Simcoe candidates to focus on early education.

"I may not be a Harper supporter. I may not be an Ignatieff supporter. I may not be a Layton supporter... What I am a supporter of is someone who is going to speak about this issue for this area in Ottawa," she declared.

With 125 clients on a year-long waiting list, Desjardins is passionate about this country's child-care strategy.

"There are 20 spaces in all of Orillia for babies -- kids from zero to 18 months old. That is shameful," she said.

Recognizing that education falls under the provincial government's jurisdiction, Desjardins believes it is up to the feds to ensure that quality child-care spaces are available countrywide.

"It is the federal government that can make conditions attached to the money they give to provinces," she said, vocalizing her support of a national child-care strategy. "High-quality care should be available to all children, regardless of where they come from or move to in this country."

The Liberal, NDP and Green candidates were in agreement with Desjardins' vision for a federal solution to the child-care issue.

"This election, I believe, is a referendum on values. Do we need to be spending \$13 billion on mega-prisons or should we be investing in a national child-care strategy?" Clarke asked. "Politicians and political parties need to understand the differences between investments and expenditures."

Valerie Powell sees early childhood issues as part of the larger issue of sustainability -- something she believes the Green Party addresses.

"You have to look at everything, the entire environment of supporting people that can lead to ecologically sustainable lifestyle," she said.

"We need to build strong communities so that needs are met throughout life."

Integrated policies that meet the Green's six core values -- ecological wisdom, non-violence, social justices, sustainability, participatory democracy and respect for diversity -- is the approach best suited to meet community needs, Powell said.

"It shouldn't be a matter of how wealthy or educated your family is," said New Democrat Richard Banigan. "All children should have opportunities."

The two parties against a national child-care strategy had differing views on how the federal government should deal with the issue of early education.

"Provinces have the lead in child care," said Conservative candidate Bruce Stanton

As a provincial responsibility, Stanton remained heavily critical of the Ontario's child-care spending record.

"The ongoing frustration with us is that any kind of agreements we have with the province is that the accountability isn't there," he said.

"There are set dollars earmarked for programs within the province. We just can't find where the spending is happening. The last report they did on day-care spots was 2006."

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- reprinted from the Orillia Packet and Times

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** campaign <sup>[3]</sup>

federal election <sup>[4]</sup>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/05/child-care-takes-centre-stage> [2] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/campaign> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-election>