

Who says what: Election coverage and sourcing of child care in four Canadian dailies ^[1]

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Abstract:

Advocates have called for universal, quality child care in Canada since the 1970s, but the issue seldom appeared to acquire political urgency. The 2006 election campaign seemed different. The governing Liberals promised to devote billions to a nascent national program. The Conservatives promised parents a cash allowance for young children. Child care seemed to be emerging as a significant issue in a political campaign. How was ECEC written about before, during and after Canadian election campaigns? Who is quoted and how? Our project mapped articles about child care in four major Canadian dailies between 2000 and 2008. We found that coverage spiked in 2000 and 2005-2006-during federal elections. Coverage nearly doubled in 2005-2006 in all but one paper. Using content analysis, we compared coverage of child care and sources in the 55 days before the start of campaigning, 55 days of campaigning, and 55 days following the 2006 election. We mapped and compared who said what, and how about child care policy and related issues, in Canada. We found: (1) that newspapers' ideological slants are apparent in their choice of sources and focus; and (2) that more importantly, despite ideological differences, political figures outnumbered activists, parents and child care providers. With only minor variations across the newspapers, the voices of parents and child care activists were marginal especially in the 55 days of campaigning.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: election ^[4]

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