

# Alternative federal budget 2013: Doing better together <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

- Full report in pdf <sup>[2]</sup>
- Early childhood education and care chapter <sup>[3]</sup>
- Budget in brief in pdf <sup>[4]</sup>
- Alternative Budgétaire Pour le Gouvernement Fédéral 2013 <sup>[5]</sup>

Attachment	Size
 <a href="#">AFB2013 Early Childhood Education and Care.pdf</a> <sup>[3]</sup>	93.56 KB

Excerpts from press release:

*Think tank calls on feds to stop growth-killing austerity Alternative Budget plan tackles Canadians' real concerns*

OTTAWA-The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) warns more austerity measures from the federal government could further stall an already stagnant economy. With the release of its annual Alternative Federal Budget (AFB), the CCPA shows how growth-killing austerity can be replaced by a plan that strengthens the economy, leads to a better quality of life for all Canadians, and eliminates the deficit by 2016.

"Canada has a growth problem, not a deficit problem," says AFB Coordinator David Macdonald. "Federal government cuts are already affecting our economy and are expected to reduce growth by a third next year. More cuts will only lead to less growth and fewer opportunities for Canadians, something we can ill afford at this time. We need to turn off the austerity auto-pilot and get our economy growing again, particularly for young Canadians."

The Alternative Federal Budget shows what the federal government could do if it decided to seriously tackle Canadians' largest social, economic, and environmental concerns.

"The Europeans have shown conclusively that austerity weakens economies, rather than strengthen them," says CCPA Senior Economist Armine Yalnizyan. "Instead of budgeting with eyes wide shut, the AFB responds to the issues that most Canadians struggle with every day. It invests in programs that are good for growth and good for Canadians, while balancing the books. Instead of making things worse and leaving Canadians to fend for themselves, the AFB shows we can do better, together."

The AFB plan:

- reduces poverty and inequality by investing in child care, pharmacare, affordable housing, income supports, and post-secondary education,
- tackles the ongoing crisis for First Nations housing, drinking water, education,
- implements a long term, transparent and public plan for investments in infrastructure,
- creates 300,000 jobs, lowering the unemployment rate to 6% by 2014, and
- introduces a new top personal income tax bracket, closes the biggest tax loopholes, and introduces a withholding tax on tax havens.

## Excerpt from the report: AFB actions on Early Childhood Education and Care

"There is compelling evidence that public investment in early childhood education and care - with its multiple benefits to multiple groups - offers among the highest benefits that nations can adopt. Studies have repeatedly shown that well-designed public spending on ECEC promotes health, advances women's equality, addresses child and family poverty, deepens social inclusion, and grows the economy.

"But wishful thinking and a market-based approach won't make it happen. The federal government must move to accountability for results by beginning to build, with the provinces/territories, a system of high-quality, affordable, inclusive, and publicly owned early childhood education and care services across Canada, with equitable access for all children and families.

"To protect and promote the public interest, the AFB provides leadership and significant funding support to provinces and territories that commit to building public systems of early childhood education and care. The goal of the AFB's early childhood education program is to reach at least 1% of GDP, starting this year with a \$2.3 billion investment that increases over the next 10 years.

"A reallocation of current expenditures provides a starting place for realizing this funding commitment. We propose to incorporate the \$2.8 billion annual funds currently spent through the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) into federal expenditures both on the early childhood education and care program, as described, and on improvements to the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), including the National Child Benefit Supplement. There is neither evidence that the considerable public expenditures on the UCCB furthers ECEC goals of improved access and quality nor is the UCCB an effective income support program that can help lift families with children out of poverty. Thus, these considerable public funds would be more effectively spent on ECEC and on the CCTB and should be moved into these columns.

"The AFB will establish a policy framework to guide collaboration with provinces and territories, providing federal funds to those that are accountable for developing and maintaining:

- Public plans (including legislated universal entitlement, targets, and timetables) for developing comprehensive and integrated systems of ECEC services that meet the care and early education needs of both children and parents.
- Public expansion through publicly delivered and publicly managed ECEC services (including integration of existing community-based services into publicly managed systems).
- Public funding delivered to ECEC systems, not to individual parents, designed to create and maintain high-quality, accessible services.
- Public monitoring and reporting in the legislatures (federal, provincial/ territorial) on the quality of, and access to, the early childhood education and care system.

"Within these broad recommendations, the AFB acknowledges the right of Canada's First Nations and Aboriginal peoples to design, deliver, and govern their own ECEC services while pointing out that Aboriginal ECEC programs have been especially neglected by the federal government. The AFB also respects Quebec's right to develop social programs. However, it is clear that additional federal funding and more focused public policy are required to further advance both quality in and equitable access to Quebec's system, so the AFB encourages the federal government to work with Quebec to achieve the province's goals for child care.

"Finally, the AFB recognizes that, in addition to high-quality accessible child care, families with young children also require, and have a right to, well-paid maternity/parental leave. But many parents - mothers and fathers - cannot afford to take or are ineligible for the maternity/parental leave benefit as it currently exists. An improved, better-paid, more inclusive, more flexible maternity/parental leave benefit program, including earmarked paternity leave, should be developed in the near future."

**Region:** Canada [6]

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