

NS budget misses opportunity to reshape child care services-CUPE ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

CUPE Nova Scotia says the provincial budget missed a golden opportunity to take a bold, new direction in providing child care services for working families in this province.

CUPE NS Vice-President Mike McNeil says, "Well directed public spending on child care is a public investment, not a public cost and is part of the solution to Nova Scotia's economic challenges. Every \$1 million invested in high quality child care creates 47 jobs and brings a \$2.23 million return in short- and long-term benefits to Nova Scotia -including educational benefits as well as increased earnings and reduced social costs."

According to a recent poll from Environics conducted on behalf of CUPE Nova Scotia, a strong majority of Nova Scotians (87%) believe it's important for government to be involved in making sure families' child care needs are met.

Says McNeil, "Families with young children know just how important it is to have high quality, affordable, accessible, trustworthy and stimulating care for their children. What's less appreciated is just how important investments in early learning and childcare are for the economy as well."

Recent analysis by highly-respected economist Robert Fairholm shows that investing in early learning and childcare would provide the strongest economic boost in terms of jobs and economic growth for Nova Scotia.

CUPE Nova Scotia continues to encourage the use of schools or other public education facilities - the so-called 'hub schools' model - to provide a publicly funded and publicly delivered early learning and child care system.

The union says it is pleased to see the government is keeping its promise to reduce the HST by 1% in 2014 and again in 2015.

The additional \$2 million in funding for seniors to use for home support is also a positive step.

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