

A wide-ranging coalition is demanding that the funding agreements on child care and family services be maintained ^[1]

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Source: Coalition for the Consolidation for Child Care and Family Services

Format: Press release

Publication Date: 28 Mar 2006

AVAILABILITY

See text below.

Text of the press release:

By canceling the federal-provincial agreement on funding child care and family services, Prime Minister Harper would be striking a blow against Québec and Canadian families. A coalition representing the players in the child care and family services sectors, union organizations, women's groups, and community groups fighting for families and social economy is demanding that the agreement be honored.

As far as the Coalition for the Consolidation for Child Care and Family Services is concerned, Québec families need the \$807 million promised over the next three years and which normally would have been given to Québec over the last three years of the five-year agreement. The coalition claims that child care and family services must receive adequate funding.

The Conservative government would like to tear up the agreement signed by Ottawa and the provinces when the Liberal Party was in power. Stephen Harper would like to take back this money and offer Canadian families a taxable benefit of \$1200 per year, for every child under six years of age. The coalition welcomes the government's intention of offering more support for families, but sees the proposed way of doing it as unjust and inequitable.

An inequitable measure

Estimates by Ruth Rose, associate professor in the Economic Sciences Department at UQAM, show that families with a modest income (annual income between \$20,000 and \$40,000) would be losers under Harper's strategy. In fact, when you take into account a family's entire economic situation, the Harper measure does not look good at all. For example, if the Québec government decides to tax this benefit at the same rate as the federal government, a family with two children under six, where both parents work and earn a total of \$35,000 a year, would finish the year not with \$2400, but with only \$671 more in its pockets. But, if the same family has a yearly income of \$100,000, it would receive more than twice that! Since this is a taxable benefit, it would have an impact on other tax credits families will have to keep part of the money in order to pay their income tax for the year.

The inequity of Harper's scheme is striking: a single-parent family with two children under six, with an annual income of \$25,000, would receive \$956 compared to \$1812 for a two-parent family where only one parent works and earns \$150,000 a year.

Furthermore, by examining different scenarios, we can see that the more children the family has, the less it will receive per child under this Conservative approach. So, a single-parent family with an annual income of \$30,000 would receive \$435 if it has only one child under six, and if it has two it will receive \$120 less per child.

The Conservatives' slip is showing

Is the Conservative government trying to bring mothers back into the home? The various scenarios studied also show that a two-child family, with one parent at home and with an annual income of \$35,000, would receive \$1,116 net, almost \$450 more than if both parents worked and together earned the same income!

For real family support

The coalition thinks that real financial support for families should be in the form of reimbursable tax credits. Such a measure would have a much more concrete impact on those families needing the most help, i.e. those with modest incomes. Such a tax credit would have fewer bad effects, would create greater solidarity, and would be more just and equitable. The coalition believes that the federal government has the duty and the means to offer such support to families, while maintaining the federal-provincial funding agreement for child care.

About the coalition

The coalition of the consolidation of child-care and family services is made up of the following organizations:

Association québécoise des centres de la petite enfance (AQCPE)

Association des enseignantes et enseignants en technique d'éducation à enfance (AEETEE)

Association des services de garde en milieu scolaire du Québec (ASGEMSQ)
Association du personnel cadre des centres de la petite enfance du Québec (APCCPE)
Carrefour action municipale et famille (CAMF)
Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ)
Chantier de l'économie social du Québec
Confederation of National Trade Unions (CNTU)
Fédération des associations de familles monoparentales et recomposées du Québec (FAFMRQ)
Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ)
Quebec Federation of Labour (QFL)
Fédération québécoise des organismes communautaires famille (FQOCF)

Region: Canada ^[2]

Quebec ^[3]

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