

Editorial off-base on public childcare system ^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

Re: Take care of your own kids, Citizen editorial June 19

In response to your diatribe against the \$10/day child care plan... of course parents take care of their own kids and child-care services support families.

Do you see it as the job of government to invest in schools, libraries, fire halls, LNG development and hospitals but not child care spaces?

Clearly you must not be aware of the economic benefits that come from the \$10/day child care plan.

Economists, such as Dr. Pierre Fortin, have proven that investment in the Quebec \$7/day child care system pays for itself. More mothers working - who pay income taxes to government and spend their paycheques and pay sales taxes - have covered the costs of the Quebec investment.

UBC experts agree the \$10/day child care plan will benefit the B.C. economy, business and parents. The Surrey Board of Trade endorsed the \$10/day plan and supporters now represent well over one million British Columbians. Municipal governments, school boards, labour, business, anti-poverty groups, early childhood organizations, social justice and women's equality groups, parents, academics and grandparents agree the \$10/day child care plan is a solution to the child care crisis.

B.C. mothers whose youngest child is age three to 15 have the lowest workforce participation in the country and second lowest for mothers whose child is under two. Ask a young mom on welfare how hard it is to find and afford child care so that she can get a job. Ask a nurse returning to work from maternity leave how hard it is to find child care for rotating shifts, ask a mum who works as a lawyer or a cashier - they'll all tell you child care is a problem because of high cost and long waiting lists.

The crisis in B.C. is real. Parent fees have reached \$1,915/month per child in some cities and waiting lists are in the thousands.

Parents who use child care are still raising their kids themselves. Nobel prize-winning economist, Dr. James Heckman, says we all benefit when kids have a healthy start in life. Kids are better prepared for school, higher graduation rates, fewer teenage pregnancies, higher life-time earnings and better life-time health. Those are good investments for all of us, unless of course Mick is suggesting that only rich people should be allowed to have kids?

Sharon Gregson

Vancouver

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Excerpts from the editorial 'Take care of your own kids' written by Mick Kearns, 19 Jun 13:

People make sacrifices to get what they want, whether it be career goals, educational goals, financial goals or otherwise. This was shown in our recent story on Dr. Sandra Wiebe who had four children while going through medical school and residency. Each time she had a child she had to make sacrifices regarding her schooling to get to her goal, and she and her husband should be commended for that.

However just because some people may have to put their career on hold or fear spending their prime childbearing years overworked, impoverished, and up-to-the-hilt with student loans, it doesn't mean we should institute a costly universal child-care system.

No one is forcing women in any career fields to give up these careers in order to raise families. That is their choice. They and their husbands need to realize the consequences of having kids on their careers, their finances and their social lives.

Since when did we start taking this responsibility away from people? It is not the government's job to make sure you can have a good career.

A recent editorial in this paper stated that according to Statistics Canada, 28 per cent of two-parent families in 2010 had one parent staying at home. In 89 per cent of those families, it was the mother who stayed home.

Could that be because the father made more money? Could that be because that is how they wanted it? It is most certainly not solely because we do not have affordable daycare.

My wife has way more education than me, but when my son was born the decision was that she would stay home and this is also the

number one preference of other new parents. If they have to go to work they look to grandparents, family or friends to look after the kids and day-care with someone you don't know coming a very distant fourth.

The recent call by the Coalition of Child Care Advocates and the Early Childhood Educators of B.C. for public child care system with a maximum fee of \$10 per day is just plain ridiculous. The system would cost initially \$1.5 billion a year and no doubt rise significantly thereafter, just like the Quebec model, which according to a May 2012 University of Sherbrooke research paper increased from \$300 million in 1997-98 to \$2.2 billion in 2011-2012. An astronomical 700 per cent increase.

The six-point labour force participation rate gap that existed between women in Quebec and those in other parts of Canada in 1996 closed completely by 2011, which tells us

that in provinces without universal day care the rate of women in the workforce is the same as that for Quebec which has universal day care. This means the only thing universal day care does is cost tax payers billions of dollars.

According to a story by the National Post, universal day care does not benefit all parents equally. Families with incomes over \$60,000 benefit most from the system, and they also make the greatest use of it.

Those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$40,000 are worse off financially than they would be using non-subsidized child care at \$26 per day. So the people you would think it should help most, it helps the least.

It is not the government's job to make day care available for people if they decide to have kids. Those who make the decision to have kids need to live with the monetary restrictions this puts on their family. Maybe they can live in a smaller home, maybe they can do without the second vehicle or the trailer or the nice vacations each year, the huge TVs or the booze and cigarettes, or the Internet and cable TV...

People need to live with the sacrifices of their decisions. You make due with what you have. You live with what you have. You don't look to others to provide it for you.

It is not the government's job to look after people because they decided to have kids. People need to consider the costs and work situation when they decide to have children. The burden should not be put on taxpayers in the form of more taxes to pay for the ever-rising \$1.2 billion needed to fund this beast.

-reprinted from the Prince George Citizen

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