

Minority report: A Report Card on the 2004-05 minority government^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

- [Report in pdf](#)^[2]

- [Press release in html](#)^[3]

Excerpts from the report:

6. Early Learning and Child Care

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- Despite overwhelming evidence about the need for, and benefits of, quality child care for women, children, families, and society, Canada still lacks a national system of ELCC.
- Currently, we have a patchwork of underfunded and unaffordable services of varying quality.

This means that:

- Millions of parents who work outside the home lack regulated care for their children, and struggle with home/work conflicts. This costs the Canadian economy an estimated \$2.7 billion annually in time lost due to work absences. Because they continue to have the primary responsibility for child care, these costs also fall largely on women.
- Since there are only enough regulated spaces for 15.5% of Canadian children, many children, e.g., those with differing abilities and those from groups with diverse cultures, family structures and economic backgrounds – are denied equitable early learning opportunities.
- The predominately female child care workforce continues to be paid low wages and to receive minimal benefits.

WHAT HAS THE MINORITY PARLIAMENT DELIVERED?

- A five-year ELCC plan with annual increments, reaching \$1.5 billion annually by year 5.
- A series of Bi-lateral Agreements-in-Principle with each of the provinces, as of November 24, 2005. Investment in regulated care is required, based on the principles of quality, universally inclusive, accessible, and developmental.
- Provinces commit to developing action plans and public reports.

WHAT'S LEFT TO DO?

- A quality, regulated, universal and inclusive system of ELCC for all children from birth to six years, from coast-to-coast-to-coast, requires:
 - stable, community-based, and integrated services;
 - an adequate supply of quality, affordable child care;
 - equitable access to existing child care spaces; and
 - public policy that entitles children to equal access to child care.
- In order to get there, we need:
 - a 15-year plan with annual increments, reaching \$5 billion annually by year 5 and \$10 billion by year 15;
 - federal legislation with standards that guarantee quality, universality, accessibility, developmental programming, and inclusion; non-profit expansion; direct funding to services with 20% parental fee contribution and 10% of the spaces, and additional resources for children with disabilities;
 - provinces and territories to develop five-year plans with goals, timelines and targets, and governments reporting to the legislature and the public;
 - additional resources and supports to meet the needs of school-age children, as well as children from Aboriginal, rural, and remote communities; and
 - a range of additional supports, such as family-friendly workplaces and adequate parental leave.

GRADE AWARDED: B

Related link: [CRRU ISSUE FILE: Early learning and child care in the 2006 federal election](#)^[4]

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