

Early learning and child care: Getting the next steps right ^[1]

Brief to the Standing Committee on Finance

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AVAILABILITY

Brief in pdf ^[2]

Excerpts from the brief:

Based on the history and condition of Canadian ELCC, the commitment to develop a universal system of high quality ELCC by the Liberal government, the high expectation that this time the promises on child care will be fulfilled, and the extensive knowledge about policy learned from work such as the OECD Review, three recommendations about financing ELCC beginning in the 2005 federal budget follow. These financing recommendations propose ways to help ensure that the next steps toward a universal national system of high quality early learning and child care will be the right steps.

1. Sustainability or "child care will be around for much longer than five years".

To successfully meet the QUAD principles, a sustained public financing and policy approach is crucial. While it is appropriate to set out shorter term targets or phases (such as the commitment to five year funding), it is also true that the absence of a serious commitment to sustainable financing over the long-term will severely handicap the new program from the beginning.

2. More funding is needed in the first five year phase, or "for the right start, a quality national child care program needs a bigger slice of the pie".

This would be especially appropriate at this time when federal fiscal surpluses are exponentially larger than previously announced and expected to continue to be so.

3. Better spending of public dollars, or "it's the policy, guys".

Judicious spending of public dollars should be based on evidence. This is not only good public policy but would suggest a commitment to accountability for spending the public's dollars well. Today there is very substantial evidence about the best & the most effective, the most likely to contribute to quality, equity and universality & ways to go in spending child care dollars.

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