

Advocates release checklist to evaluate national child care talks

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Source: Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada

Format: Press release

Publication Date: 1 Nov 2004

AVAILABILITY

Press release in pdf [2]

Text of the press release:

As government representatives gather to develop a national child care plan, child care advocates will be watching closely to ensure the ministers lay a solid foundation that supports a universal, high-quality public program. They have developed a six-point checklist they'll be using to measure progress and evaluate the program being shaped in the coming days and months.

Last June, in the federal election, Liberals promised to introduce a "Quebec-style" early learning and child care system across Canada. When they formed the government, it began to look as though the welcome promise for Canada's children would be fulfilled.

In October, a report released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) firmly criticized Canada's early learning and child care arrangements. Their analysis reinforces that the action promised by the Liberals is urgent and that transformational change is needed.

In addition, the OECD's detailed suggestions for change point the way to the quality, universal, accessible, developmental and inclusive child care system promised in June. It is about more than money: Layering new funding on top of what is not working will only produce more of the same. The outcome of upcoming federal/provincial/territorial negotiations will be critical for the future of Canada's children. The following checklist will be used to measure progress.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments must commit to:

- Move from the current user pay and subsidy patchwork to publicly funded early learning and child care programs as in Quebec and many OECD countries.
- Guarantee that new federal money will be in addition to existing federal commitments and that provincial and territorial governments will increase and supplement, not replace, existing provincial spending.
- Enshrine the principles of early learning and child care in legislation and introduce standards that guarantee quality, universal, accessible, developmental and inclusive programs.
- Dedicate a separate funding stream for a new federal transfer to provinces and territories to ensure stable and adequate funding.
- Agree that all expansion takes place through public and/or not for profit delivery. Existing for profit programs may be grand-parented.
- Tie provincial and territorial accountability to five -year plans that include goals and objectives, timelines and targets, review and evaluation as they build the new Child Care system.

These commitments are essential to concluding a successful federal/provincial/territorial agreement.

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