

Getting less bang for the child care buck – all \$6.8 billion of them

[1]

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3pp

Summary:

- Canada is the lowest spender on regulated ECEC among OECD countries;
- There is strong evidence that demand-side spending (vouchers, cheques, tax breaks) is ineffective for providing ECEC options for families;
- The Government of Canada spends \$3.8 billion/yr-and could soon be spending \$6.8 billion/yr-on child care-linked demand-side funds, with provinces spending billions more;
- Research (Fortin et al, 2012) shows that accessible, affordable child care is an economic asset;
- Yet Canadian families cannot find, and many cannot afford, the high quality early childhood education and care they want and need;
- There is no evidence that the three demand-side funds are effective ways to spent substantial ECEC-linked dollars;
- Given this hefty spending, the idea that Canada "can't afford" to support families with a universal national child care program does not make social or fiscal sense.

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