

Conference heeds urgent need for solving child care crisis ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

More than 400 people will meet here in November to discuss policy solutions to the continuing crisis in child care so that future generations of parents will no longer have to struggle to find and afford high quality services for their children.

Organizers say Canada's first national child care policy conference in ten years, ChildCare2020: From Vision to Action, will draw people from all parts of the sector, including national and international experts and politicians from all levels of government. Participants will debate key child care issues, such as how to achieve universal access to services, make them affordable for families, meet the child care needs of Indigenous communities, and improve training and working conditions for those who work with young children.

"Canada is one of the world's wealthiest nations yet has a very poor record when it comes to high quality early years services," said conference spokesperson Ruth Bancroft. "It might surprise Canadians to know that we lag behind all other developed nations and some developing nations in this regard. The conference will propose an updated vision for child care in Canada and, just as important, will show how the country can afford such a program."

Bancroft said the conference will also pass the torch to a new generation of advocates who will continue to press for federal involvement in creating a child care program. Planned early childhood education and child care programs have overwhelmingly been shown to help address multiple social and political aims: women's equality and employment, poverty reduction, family-work balance, social integration and equal opportunity, healthy child development and well-being, and economic prosperity.

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