

Throne Speech passes first child care test - but not with flying colours ^[1]

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See text below.

Text of the press release:

"While recognizing that language on a "truly national child care system" in the Throne Speech is a first and that the reiteration of the QUAD principles is a significant indication of the government's commitment to child care, we are concerned about the absence in the speech of key details that are needed to make this commitment a reality," stated Shellie Bird, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care (OCBCC) co-president.

Bird is referring to yesterday's federal Speech from the Throne which restated the principles first outlined in election promises: quality, universality, accessibility and developmental. After hearing the Speech, parents and children across Ontario anxiously awaited the Prime Minister's reply today to the Throne Speech, hoping for more information on how the government plans to make a new child care system work. "Unfortunately," concluded Bird, "even though we applaud Paul Martin's vision and agree that we are on the brink of a defining moment in Canadian social policy, the details we were looking for weren't there today."

To successfully implement a truly national child care system, the OCBCC calls on the government to commit to the following:

- Legislation enshrining the QUAD principles and the addition of a principle on inclusion. Securing these five principles in legislation will go a long way towards creating a high quality system that will last for years to come.
- Mechanisms to hold provinces and territories accountable to national standards, timelines and spending areas. While the OCBCC supports Quebec's distinct status position, we do not support asymmetrical relationships with other provinces/territories.
- Timelines, benchmarks and the initial investment of \$5 billion dollars over 5 years.

Cheryl DeGras, OCBCC co-president, added: "We are ready to work with this government right away on getting started. Of course parents and child care supporters are looking to the NDP and the Bloc Quebecois for support and leadership in working with the Liberals to accomplish this strategy. We are also expecting the provincial government in Ontario to lead by example by working with the federal government on designing and implementing a high quality public child care system, including on principles of accountability."

"Ultimately," concluded DeGras, "we are looking for a fundamental systems change, with significant steps that move child care from the current user fee and subsidy system to one that is funded through the tax system as a public service. The next test for this minority government is the budget & we'll be watching and hoping they pass it with flying colours."

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