

Strengthening Canada's social and economic foundations: Next steps for early childhood education and child care ^[1]

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Author: Friendly, Martha

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AVAILABILITY

Full issue of Policy Options available for order (see SOURCE). Article by M. Friendly available for download.

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Excerpts from article:

Compared with Western European countries, Canada is a laggard in terms of progress toward a system of universal, high quality early childhood education and child care (ECEC). Martha Friendly, one of Canada's most ardent advocates of such a system, reviews Canada's evolution in this domain and, most importantly, charts the way to creating a universal daycare program. The first step is for the federal government to make a clear, public commitment to achieving a coherent, accessible and high quality system, says Friendly. Then, a specific action plan and a well-crafted public policy framework requiring close federal-provincial/territorial collaboration will be needed, as well as adequate public financing. Such a system she points out, would require a doubling of current spending over the next 10 to 15 years. Investing in ECEC, she argues, is fundamental to healthy child development and lifelong learning, and will pay off in its contribution to improving Canada's social fabric, competitiveness and productivity.

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