

A new economy needs child care ^[1]

In Focus

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AVAILABILITY

Full report in PDF ^[2]

Description:

The Report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy, otherwise known as the Ivany Report, makes "an urgent call to action" for the province's future. While we also see the need for fundamental change in Nova Scotia, we have many concerns about this report, ranging from its narrow definition of the problem, to its selective research, to its dubious and sometimes contradictory solutions. But here, we would like to focus on one glaring omission-the role that social policy and in particular, early learning and child care (ELCC) play in economic development.

For the Ivany Report, the major problems facing the province are "industry failures, slow business growth, faltering employment levels, the loss of young people and skilled workers to other provinces, and the shrinking viability of many rural communities" (Ivany et al. 2014 vi). To be sure, in the face of demographic and economic decline, we do agree with some of the sentiments expressed in the report, but we believe these should lead to radically different solutions than those proposed by the Commission. For instance, we too are troubled by the "lack of solidarity as a province" (Ivany et al. 2014 vii), but we would like to see solidarity mobilized toward social investment rather than austerity. We too are tired of "tentative half steps and continued muddling through," and agree it can't be "business as usual" (Ivany et al. 2014 viii), but there are few areas where half steps, muddling through, and stagnation are more acute than in limited support for working families. It is astounding, therefore, that child care is not mentioned even once in the report, including in an entire section on 'human capital'!

Related link: Global News interview with Tammy Findlay Should the provincial government subsidize childcare? ^[3]

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