

Advocates urge Canadians to vote for child care in fall election ^[1]

Author: Monsebraaten, Laurie

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EXCERPTS

Just in time for Mother's Day this weekend, daycare advocates are launching a national campaign to encourage Canadians to "vote child care" ^[3] in next fall's federal election.

"Child care in Canada is a silent struggle. It's parents trying to piece things together. It's child-care workers who are underpaid and underappreciated," said Carolyn Ferns of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, part of a national association of child care advocates co-ordinating the initiative.

"We want to make the child-care crisis visible in Canada," she said. "At the same time, we want to celebrate quality child-care programs as a public good and an important issue for Canadians to be talking about and pushing for in the federal election. We want quality child care all families can afford."

Activities include a "spring into action for child care" picnic on Saturday at parks across the country, including Toronto's Trinity Bellwoods Park and a "chalk it up for child care" ^[4] event on May 14 when daycares, parents and advocates are being invited to create messages of support on sidewalks, parking lots and play spaces.

In Ottawa, a group is staging a "pop-up playgroup" and in Toronto, a parent is hosting a community event she calls: "Affordable child care: Why Wait?" ^[5] for parents to share their experiences and talk about how they want Ottawa to help.

The NDP released its \$15-a-day child care platform last fall which proposes to help create one million affordable spots within eight years.

The Conservatives and Liberals will be campaigning on a list of "family friendly" tax measures and benefits.

The week of action concludes next Friday on the International Day of the Family, but the campaign is expected to continue throughout the spring and summer until election day.

- reprinted from the Toronto Star

Region: Canada ^[6]

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