

Assessing family policy in Canada: A new deal for families and children^[1]

Author: Lefebvre, Pierre and Merrigan, Philip

Source: Institute for Research on Public Policy^[2]

Format: Report

Publication Date: 10 Jun 2003

AVAILABILITY

Available in print for order (see SOURCE) and online for download.

- **Summary in pdf**^[3]

- **Full study in pdf**^[4]

Excerpts from news release:

An exhaustive examination of Canada's family policy concludes that recent federal and provincial government initiatives are misguided and have not efficiently addressed the problems of child poverty. "The Child Tax Benefit is a dead end" assert Pierre Lefebvre and Philip Merrigan in "Assessing Family Policy in Canada: A New Deal for Families and Children," released today by the Institute for Research on Public Policy. The authors argue that current programs do not meet their intended objectives and, most troubling, they do not achieve their primary goal, which is to reduce child poverty. Further, when these programs are combined with current welfare and unemployment assistance programs, there is no real incentive for families to increase their employment income, they say. They also find that equity has been reduced for two-child, two-parent, working families.

Lefebvre and Merrigan argue that governments should adopt a life-cycle policy framework and focus on investing in the human capital of children with programs targeted at early childhood development. These types of programs are especially important for vulnerable children, because they tend to shield them from the negative impact of living in poor or dysfunctional families. In addition, since children are poor because they live with adults who are poor, the only long-term and efficient means of reducing poverty are those that will encourage adults' entry into and attachment to the job market. Finally, all children are equally worthy of societal support, and the cornerstone of any family policy should be a substantial, universal, non-taxable child benefit.

To complete Canada's human capital strategy, they also propose the following:

- Increase paid maternity and parental leave and consider introducing maternity allowances to make it financially feasible for all parents to bond with their children during infancy.
- Convert the Child Care Expense Deduction into a refundable tax credit for child-care expenses and reduce the cost of high-quality child care for low income families.
- Introduce full-day kindergarten for five-year olds and gradually introduce full-day junior kindergarten for four-year-olds to eliminate the skill inequalities that hamper the academic success of many children.
- Consider redirecting current subsidies for post-secondary education and public training programs into programs for children. Poor motivation at early stages of development and inadequate academic preparation are much greater barriers to post-secondary education than the affordability of post-secondary tuition.

Region: Canada^[5]

Tags: subsidy^[6]

economics^[7]

poverty^[8]

child development^[9]

kindergarten^[10]

gender^[11]

federal programs^[12]

maternity and parental leave^[13]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/07/assessing-family-policy-canada-new-deal-families-and>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/03/07/assessing-family-policy-canada-new-deal-families-and> [2] <https://irpp.org/> [3]

<http://irpp.org/newsroom/archive/2003/0610sume.pdf> [4] <http://irpp.org/choices/archive/vol9no5.pdf> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864>
[6] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/subsidy> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/economics> [8]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-development> [10]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/kindergarten> [11] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/gender> [12]
<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs> [13] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/maternity-and-parental-leave>