

Election 2015: How childcare impacts Kelowna's affordability ^[1]

Author: Michaels, Kathy

Source: Kelowna Capital News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 9 Oct 2015

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

Amanda Parks was born and raised in Kelowna and now has two children of her own, under the age of three.

For most of their lives she's been a stay-at-home-mom, relying on her husband to be the sole breadwinner.

Living on one income in a city as expensive as Kelowna can be pretty tough, however, so last month she opted to take a retail job.

"I can only work at night because daycare is too expensive," she said. "My husband works during the day and he watches the kids when I'm gone."

In many daycares around Kelowna, full time child-minding costs somewhere in the area of \$800-plus a month. Families that qualify for subsidy pay significantly less, but, then again, they make less, as well.

So, the incentive to stay at home for Parks, and many people in her position, is pretty high.

After she found a way to balance her family obligations and work, however, she looked into another childcare option.

Her eldest child is the right age for pre-school, which is aimed at getting young people ready for kindergarten. She found a place near her home in the Mission, but it's not going to work yet.

"It was so hard because they were asking for too much," she said, pointing out for three days a week, and three hours a day, preschool costs in the area of \$200 a month.

It was only spot available at a school in her area, but she still had to take a pass.

"I'll look again in January, but the hard part will be finding a spot," she said.

Not enough spaces and too high a cost is a lament heard from one end of the country to the other.

Earlier this year, the Parliamentary Budget Officer published a report titled *How Much Does the Federal Government Spend on Child Care and Who Benefits?*

In 2013-2014, Canadian families spent \$5.7 billion in child care expenses. This represents five per cent of the average Canadian family's total household expenses.

It's a heavy burden, and the federal government currently has two initiatives explicitly and directly linked to defraying the costs of child care expenses; the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) and the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED).

The value of child care benefits grew from \$0.6 billion in 2004-2005 to approximately \$3.3 billion in 2013-2014, amounting to 59 per cent of what Canadian families were spending on child care in 2013 to 2014.

Some have said, however, that this isn't enough.

As the campaign has heated up candidates for each party have spoken out about what they would like to do to enhance or change what is already being done.

NDP..

Proposed a universal daycare system. The party's plan is to spend \$5 billion a year after an eight-year phase-in to pay for a million existing and new child-care spaces that cost parents no more than \$15 a day. The aim is to create quality, affordable child-care spaces in each province. Quebec has already instituted a similar plan and it's been lauded for allowing more women the ability to enter the workforce and improve upon the economic stability of their families.

Conservatives...

Last year expanded the Universal Child Care Benefit program, which the Conservative government introduced in 2006. In July, it was given a one-time boost of \$3-billion to the UCCB. The plan is what Prime Minister Stephen Harper has called "mom and dad know best" strategy.

Liberals...

Calls national child-care program "impractical and unfair," but party also claims it would rework what's pre-existing with a national "framework" negotiated with provinces, territories and aboriginal groups. Would also work with provinces to introduce a "flexible" system of parental benefits that would let parents take time off in smaller blocks, or in a longer block with reduced benefits. Liberals would also implement "Canada Child Benefit" of up to \$533 a month per child, supported in part by a tax hike on wealthier Canadians and tax cuts for the middle class.

Green Party...

Greens committed to a high-quality federally-funded child care program in Canada, accessible to any family that wants to place children into early childhood education. Party also wants to focus on workplace child care as party believes it has been shown to improve productivity, decrease employee absenteeism, ensure quality care for children and permits longer breast-feeding of infants. If elected, Greens would also accelerate the creation of workplace child care spaces through a direct tax credit to employers (or groups of employers in small businesses) of \$1500 tax credit/child per year.

The Childcare Advocacy Association of Canada has a thorough run-through of all the issues as they see them, and where the parties stand. For more information go to <http://ccaac.ca> [3].

-reprinted from Kelowna Capital News

Region: British Columbia ^[4]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/10/election-2015-how-childcare-impacts-kelownas-affordability>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/15/10/election-2015-how-childcare-impacts-kelownas-affordability> [2]

<https://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/election-2015-how-childcare-impacts-kelownas-affordability/> [3] <http://ccaac.ca> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860>