

Enabling citizenship: Full inclusion of children with disabilities and their parents ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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

- Full report in pdf ^[2]

Excerpt from executive summary :

This discussion paper is the first of a two-phase research project, both of which are extensions of the analysis carried out in the Best Policy Mix for Canada's Children research program. This study extends the Best Mix approach to an examination of federal and provincial government policies and investments as they affect preschool and school-aged children with various disabilities, their parents, guardians and siblings. To this end, the paper consists of an analysis, accompanied by an Appendix that provide detailed inventories of current policies and programs directed towards children with disabilities and their families in Canada.

The report concludes that, while most children with disabilities and their parents are living in our communities, they are not active members of these communities. While some provinces have made gains in various areas - including the administrative arrangements in place for delivering services and supports - there is no coherent vision for achieving the best possible policy mix for children with disabilities and their parents, especially school-aged children. Few provinces have such a vision for their own jurisdiction, and no consensus exists as yet for the country as a whole. Nor do all families who care for a child with disabilities have adequate income and supports for effective parenting. Too often, they live in poverty and struggle to obtain the services and supports that they desperately need.

The continued exclusion of children with disabilities from regular child care facilities, educational settings, and recreational facilities and programs, as well as the under-resourced, complex, fragmented set of available specialized services, means that full civil and social citizenship rights are not realized. In short, children with disabilities and their parents do not benefit from full access to work, education, and individual and community supports and services. Most do not, therefore, embrace a strong sense of community belonging. Thus, they are not full citizens. The time has come for governments to deem a priority the needs of all of Canada's children, including those with disabilities.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: special needs ^[4]

family resource programs ^[5]

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