

What now for child care?



Overview

What now for child care? was a two-day policy symposium that gathered over 60 researchers, Indigenous experts, advocates, policy makers and child care sector stakeholders from across Canada in an in-person event in Ottawa June 9–10, 2022. The symposium was sponsored by *Re-imagining care/work policies* [1], a SSHRC Partnership Grant project, which focuses on the intersections between child care, parental leave and employment for diverse families. CRRU and Child Care Now, both community partners on the SSHRC project, collaborated with other members of the SSHRC project to organize the event.

Purpose

The event's purpose was to take stock of how far early learning and child care policy has come on the path to a quality, inclusive early learning and child care (ELCC) system for all. Recognizing that we have achieved the first significant benchmark of agreements with all provinces and territories, it is important to now drill down on the next steps in implementing those agreements and associated action plans. The symposium – designed to generate free-flowing, inclusive exchange of ideas – was organized by four main policy topics and four policy propositions.



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Programme

Day 1: Child care challenges ahead

Following a welcome and land acknowledgement by sociologist, Canada Research Chair and the SSHRC grant PI Andrea Doucet, the first day of the symposium was structured by four topical panels, each starting with the presentations by the panelists and followed by a Q&A. Susan Prentice, Duff Roblin Professor of Government & Sociology, University of Manitoba, one of the event's organizers, moderated the panels and the participant discussion.

A highlight of the symposium's first day was a mid-day address by the Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. Minister Gould reinforced the need for all of us to work collaboratively to build a Canada-wide ELCC system, calling it a "nation-building project."

Note: Click on the presentation titles to access presentation slides in PDF format.

Panel 1: Indigenous perspectives on building an ELCC system

1. *Inuit Nunangat and the Inuit early learning and child care landscape* ^[2] by Amy Graham (Senior Policy Advisor, Inuit Tapirat Kanatami)
2. *Métis early learning and child care* ^[3] by Sharlene Wedel (Senior Director of Education and ELCC, Métis National Council)
3. *Indigenous rights and distinction-based approach* (presentation slides not available) by Karen Isaac (Executive Director at BC Aboriginal Child Care Society)

Panel 2: Making ELCC truly affordable for families

1. *Child care fees vs. targets in 2022* ^[4] by David Macdonald (Senior Economist, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives)
2. *The Canada-wide ELCC agreements and affordability* ^[5] by Jane Beach (Independent child care researcher)
3. *\$10aDay Child Care campaign in British Columbia* ^[6] by Lynell Anderson (Public Policy Researcher, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC)

Panel 3: Expanding availability of regulated child care

1. *Availability and expansion of ELCC services: What's needed?* ^[7] by Martha Friendly (Executive Director, Childcare Resources and Research Unit)
2. *Expansion of regulated child care spaces: Insights from Québec* ^[8] by Sophie Mathieu (Senior Program Specialist, Vanier Institute of the Family)
3. *Expansion of regulated child care spaces* ^[9] by Christine McLean (Associate Professor, Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia)

Panel 4: Addressing the child care workforce crisis

1. *Pan-Canadian ELCC system building: The education of early childhood educators* ^[10] by Christopher Smith (Associate Executive Director, Muttart Foundation)
2. *Working conditions and retention* ^[11] by Jane Beach (Independent child care researcher)
3. *Worth more: Making decent work and pay in child care a priority* ^[12] by Carolyn Ferns (Public Policy and Government Relations Coordinator, Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care)

Day 2: Child care policy refresh

On the second day of the symposium, attendees participated in a lively plenary discussion on the four draft policy propositions, facilitated by Vicky Smallman, President of the Child Care Now board and National Director of Women's and Human Rights, Canadian Labour Congress.

The participants were invited to reflect on four draft policy propositions and share their feedback or suggestions during facilitated conversations on the following draft policy propositions:

1. Child care should be supported by full and sufficient public operational funding
2. Timely expansion of early learning and child care in a public universal system is critical.
3. The child care workforce is the keystone to successful implementation of the universal child care system.
4. Legislation is a key tool for building a universal early learning and child care system.

Please note that these policy propositions were draft – to be discussed and were not finalized. Rather they will be the basis of ongoing discussion as the child care movement and allies collaborate to develop next steps in implementing a Canada-wide child care system.

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Report

A report prepared by Child Care Now will be made available here in the near future.

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The symposium in pictures

The video below is a collection of pictures from the "What now for child care?" symposium.



[13]

Watch video online [13]

Thu, 08/04/2022

What's next

The symposium was wrapped up with discussion about potential research, actions and campaigns among participants in their respective organizations and communities. The discussions brought to attention different action proposals, including but not limited to:

- Cohesive key messaging in social media campaigns and resources distributed to the public;
- Active ongoing collaboration with Inuit, Métis, and First Nations allies;
- Centering the voices and experiences of the child care workforce;
- Strengthening the child care advocacy movement Canada-wide;
- Further research, policy and practice events, and
- Capacity building and mentoring in the child care policy and advocacy sectors.

A detailed report of the symposium is being prepared by Child Care Now and will be made available soon.

A public webinar to further discuss the outcomes of the symposium and next steps in child care policy making, advocacy and research will be held later in summer 2022.

CRRU is developing a new resource that will provide ongoing information, research, and tools to be used by researchers, advocates policy makers and the child care sector in this next phase of implementing the ELCC agreements.

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Source URL (modified on 7 Jul 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/what-now-child-care>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.us10.list-manage.com/track/click?u=80bb273f376b0a3f99dfd76b4&id=e7425b7c95&e=6503cd1683> [2] https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%201a%20-%20Inuit%20Nunangat%20_%20Inuit%20ELCC%20landscape%20-%20Amy%20Graham.pdf [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%201b%20-%20Metis%20ELCC%20-%20Sharlene%20Wedel.pdf> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%202a%20-%20Child%20care%20fees%20-%20David%20Macdonald.pdf> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%202b%20-%20ELCC%20agreement%20%26%20affordability%20-%20Jane%20Beach.pdf> [6] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%202c%20-%202410aDay%20Child%20Care%20in%20BC%20-%20Lynell%20Anderson.pdf> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%203a%20-%20Availability%20%26%20expansion%20-%20Martha%20Friendly.pdf> [8] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%203b%20-%20Expansion%20insights%20from%20Quebec%20-%20Sophie%20Mathieu.pdf> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%203c%20-%20Expansion%20-%20Christine%20McLean.pdf> [10] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%204a%20-%20Education%20of%20ECEs%20-%20Christopher%20Smith.pdf> [11] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%204b%20-%20Working%20conditions%20%26%20retention%20-%20Jane%20Beach.pdf> [12] <https://childcarecanada.org/sites/default/files/Panel%204c%20-%20Decent%20work%20-%20Carolyn%20Ferns.pdf> [13] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6A-NO-ne_8w