Early childhood education and child care - STILL central to women's equality

To mark International Women's Day, CRRU has created an Issue File on ECEC and Canadian women.

It was on International Women's Day 1986 that Brian Mulroney's Conservative federal government released the Report of the Task Force on Child Care (the "Katie Cooke Task Force") initiated by the previous Liberal government. The Task Force called for a universal system of child care co-funded by federal and provincial governments. The Task Force report recommended that the system of non-profit services be designed and managed by the provinces under national standards, have affordable parent fees, and gradually increase in supply until 2001 when it would serve all children.

The Task Force report was the first federal report calling for a national child care program as an "urgent matter". More than a decade earlier, a 1970 report from the Royal Commission on the Status of Women made 167 recommendations including establishing a "national day-care Act." Although most of these recommendations were at least partially implemented, the recommendation for a national childcare program was one of the few that went completely unaddressed.

The Cooke Task Force's benchmark year, 2001, came and went eleven years ago yet child care remains a major challenge for many Canadian families. Still today only a minority of Canadian children have access to regulated child care.

In a 2008 UNICEF report card on early childhood education and childcare (ECEC) provision, Canada scored 25 out of 25 affluent countries. Canada achieved only 1 of 10 benchmarks for access, quality and financing of ECEC. Meanwhile, the labour force participation rates of women with children have risen dramatically over the last 25 years in Canada.

In 2009, 69.7% of mothers with a youngest child aged 3-5 years were in the paid labour force. Working mothers bear a double workload in society as they face the difficult challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Access to reliable early childhood education and child care is central to women's equality. The 1984 Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, headed by the current Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella, said that, "child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers".

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948) proclaims that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." In 1979, the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) - an international agreement that Canada ratified. As a signatory, Canada pledged "to ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights". In its evaluation of Canada's progress in January 2003, the UN Status of Women Commission recommended that Canada should "expand affordable child care facilities under all governments and...report, with nationwide figures, on demand, availability and affordability of child care in its next report" (Paragraph 380).

Yet Canada failed to address this issue and its compliance with CEDAW was questioned before the Commission again in 2010. Canadian advocates identified the lack of progress on child care, as well as what seems to be a full force attack on women's issues. Under the Harper government Canada's first comprehensive national child care strategy was cancelled in 2006 and Status of Women Canada has been completely decimated. The current government has simply denied federal funds to women's advocacy organizations. The report *Reality check: Women in Canada and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action - Fifteen years on*, submitted by labour and women's groups, identified "a systematic erosion of the human rights of women and girls in Canada". The report went on to explain that "the changes to gender architecture, the shifts in policy and programming within the government and the government's response to the economic crisis have been felt by the most vulnerable women and girls in Canada."

Access to ECEC is also critical for low-income women to interrupt the cycle poverty and isolation. Women need childcare to pusue training, education and gainful employment opportunities.

Finally, even women who are home full-time often want their children to be a part of quality developmental, social and cognitive experiences outside the home.

Today comparative research and analysis shows that ECEC programs designed around children's interests, development and wellbeing can also support women's equality - if they are well-designed and publicly supported. Programs that are universally accessible and of high-quality can satisfy the multiple goals of maternal employment, child development, social solidarity, social and human capital development-and both women's and children's rights.

This Issue File collects selected readings that describe and document the importance of accessible ECEC to women's economic equality and to their opportunities to fully engage in society. This Issue File is organized into six sections:

- Background: Data and commentary on the state of Canadian women [1]
- Canada's international commitments and ECEC [2]

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- Canadian research and reports about women and ECEC [3]
- International reports and perspectives [4]
- Print resources [5]
- Useful websites [6]

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Tags:

poverty [7]

gender [8]

demographics [9]

mother's labour force participation [10]

Background: Data and commentary on the state of Canadian women

Ontario's gender gap: Women and jobs post-recession [11]

By Kate McInturff

SOURCE: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 26 Mar 14

Global gender gap report 2013 [12]

SOURCE: World Economic Forum, 25 Oct 2013

Women in Canada: A gender-based statistical report. 6th Edition, 2010-2011 [13]

By Ferrao, Vincent & Williams, Cara (2011) SOURCE: Statistics Canada, 26 July 2011

Lip service to equality [14]

By Dallaire, Jody

SOURCE: Straight Goods, 9 Aug 2011

Abolishing the long form census muzzles women's organizations [15]

By Dallaire, Jody

SOURCE: Straight Goods, 6 Jun 2011

Federal election 2011: Women's equality [16]

SORCE: Canadian Union of Public Employees, 12 Apr 2011

Reports and Analysis: Income splitting proposal in the 2011 federal election [17]

SOURCE: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 29 Mar 2011

Low fertility in Canada: The Nordic model in Quebec and the U.S. model in Alberta [18]

By Beaujot, Roderic & Wang, Juyan

SOURCE: Canadian Studies in Population, 25 Apr 2011

Women's push for equality in Canada stalled or regressing: report [19]

By Bryden, Joan

SOURCE: Canadian Press, 21 Feb 2010

Women's rights have declined under Harper - researcher ${\scriptstyle [20]}$

By Bowie, Adam

SOURCE: Daily Gleaner, 1 Jun 2011

From a woman's perspective: Canada's place in the world $_{\rm [21]}$

By Yalnizyan, Armine

SOURCE: Progressive Economics Forum, 9 Mar 2010

Career interrupted: The economic impact of motherhood [22]

Caranci, Beata & Gauthier, Pascal SOURCE: TD Economics, 12 Oct 2010

Women's poverty and the recession [23]

By Townson, Monica

SOURCE: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 1 Sep 2009

The global gender gap report 2008 $_{[24]}$

By Hausmann, Ricardo, Tyson, Laura & Zahidi, Saadi SOURCE: World Economic Forum 31 Oct 2008

From she to she: Changing patterns of women in the Canadian labour force [25]

by Roy, Francine

SOURCE Statistics Canada, 15 Jun 2006

Canada's commitment to equality: A gender analysis of the last ten federal budgets (1995-2004) [26]

SOURCE Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 08 Feb 05

Women and the equality deficit: The impact of restructuring Canada's social programs [27]

by Day, Shelagh & Brodsky, Gwen

SOURCE Status of Women Canada, 1998

Canada's international commitments and ECEC

Reality Check: Women in Canada and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Fifteen Years On [28] SOURCE: Canadian Labour Congress and Feminist Allianace For International Action (FAFIA), Dec 2010

Interim Report in follow-up to the review of Canada's Sixth and Seventh Reports [29]

By Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, Government of Canada

SOURCE: West Coast Leaf, Feb 2010

What does CEDAW mean for child care in Canada? [30]

SOURCE: Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 1 Mar 09

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Canada [31]

SOURCE: United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 7 Nov 08

Women's inequality in Canada: Submission of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the occasion of the Committee's review of Canada's 6th & 7th reports [32]

SOURCE: Feminist Alliance for International Action, 1 Sep 08

A decade of going backwards: Canada in the Post-Beijing era [33]

SOURCE: Feminist Alliance for International Action, 01 Jan 05

Human rights denied: Single mothers on social assistance in British Columbia [34]

By Brodsky, Gwen; Buckley, Melina; Day, Shelagh & Young, Margot

SOURCE: West Coast Leaf, 2005

British Columbia moves backwards on women's equality: Submission of the B.C. CEDAW group to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on the occasion of the Committee's review of Canada's 5th report [34]

SOURCE: West Coast Leaf, 23 Jan 03

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women: Twenty-eighth session (13-31 January 2003) [35]

SOURCE: UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Jan 03

Canada's failure to act: Women's inequality deepens: Submission of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women on the occasion of the Committee's review of Canada's 5th report [36]

SOURCE: Feminist Alliance for International Action, 01 Jan 03

Canadian research and reports about women and ECEC

Think child care is no longer a women's issue? [37]

By Martha Friendly and Shani Halfon

SOURCE: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 6 Mar 13

News flash: Mothers still need child care - straight from the horse's mouth [38]

By Friendly, Martha

SOURCE: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 23 Jun 2011

Educated, employed and equal: The economic prosperity case for national child care [39]

SOURCE: YWCA Canada, 7 Mar 2011

"I should have applied before I was pregnant": How child care in Toronto fails mothers [40]

SOURCE: Mothers' Task Force on Child Care, 17 Jun 2011

National child care often promised, still missing [41]

By Friendly, Martha

SOURCE: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 11 Oct 2010

Tackling women's and children's poverty- Early learning and care services are part of the solution [42]

By Prentice, Susan

SOURCE: Childcare Coalition of Manitoba, 4 Dec 2009

No lifeline for women and children in today's budget? [43]

by Friendly, Martha

SOURCE Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 27 Jan 09

Child care policy and the labor supply of mothers with young children: A natural experiment from Canada [44]

by Lefebvre, Pierre & Merrigan, Philip

SOURCE: Journal of Labor Economics, 2008, vol. 26, no. 3

Why Canada can't work without good childcare: How early childhood education and care supports the economy [45]

By Friendly, Martha

SOURCE: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Sep 2008

Caring about employability [46]

SOURCE: Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, 31 Oct 06

It was twenty years ago today...March 8, 1986 [47]

CRRU Briefing Note by Martha Friendly

SOURCE Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 8 Mar 06

The OECD and the reconciliation agenda: Competing blueprints [48]

By Mahon, Rianne

SOURCE: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 2005

Women, equality & social programs: The vital connection [49]

By Day, Shelagh

SOURCE: Poverty and Human Rights Project, 19 Jan 2005

New realities of earning and caring [50]

By Jenson, Jane

SOURCE: Canadian Policy Research Network, 29 Oct 04

Voices: Women, poverty and homelessness in Canada $\scriptstyle [51]$

SOURCE: National Anti-Poverty Organization, 1 May 04

Women in non-standard jobs: The public policy challenge [52]

By Townson, Monica

SOURCE: Status of Women Canada, April 03

Also available in French. [53]

Living beyond the edge: The impact of trends in non-standard work on single/lone-parent mothers [54]

By Stephenson, Marylee and Emery, Ruth

SOURCE: Status of Women Canada, 16 Oct 2003

Feminist perspectives on social inclusion and children's well-being [55]

by Luxton, Meg

SOURCE: Laidlaw Foundation, June 02

The framing of poverty as 'child poverty' and its implications for women [56]

by Wiegers, Wanda

SOURCE: Status of Women Canada, June 2002

Also available in French. [57]

Social policy, gender inequality and poverty $_{[58]}$

By Davies, Lorraine; McMullin, Julie Ann; Avison, William & Cassidy, Gale

SOURCE: Status of Women Canada, February 2002 / In html and pdf.

Also available in French. [59]

Stacking the deck: The relationship between reliable child care and lone mothers' attachment to the labour force [60]

By Mason, Robin

SOURCE: Campaign 2000, May 2001

Mothers as earners, mothers as carers: Responsibility for children, social policy and the tax system [61]

By Freiler, Christa; Stairs, Felicite and Kitchen, Brigitte with Cerny, Judy SOURCE: Status of Women Canada, February 2001 / In html and pdf.

Also available in French. [62]

Women, citizenship and Canadian child care policy in the 1990s ${\scriptstyle [63]}$

by Tyyskä, Vappu

SOURCE: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, March 2001

Women's support, women's work: Child care in an era of deficit reduction, devolution, downsizing and deregulation [64]

by Doherty, Gillian; Friendly, Martha & Oloman, Mab

SOURCE: Status of Women Canada, March 1998 / In html and pdf.

Also available in French. [65]

International reports and perspectives

The price of motherhood: Women and part-time work [66] (UK)

By Alakeson, Vidhya

SOURCE: Resolution Foundation, 9 Feb 2012

Pay matters: The positive economic impacts of paid family leave for families, businesses and the public [67] (US)

By Houser, Linda & Vartanian, Thomas P.

SOURCE: Rutgers Center for Women and Work, 19 Jan 2012

The missing million: The potential for female employment to raise living standards in low to middle income Britain [68] (UK)

By Plunkett, James

SOURCE: Resolution Foundation, 10 Dec 2011

Women's voices: Report from consultations on factors influencing women's decisions on work-force attachment, including tax and transfers [69] (AU)

By Coleman, Marie & Hodgson, Helen

SOURCE: Equality Rights Alliance, 21 Sep 2011

One million women unemployed, a quarter unemployed long-term [70](UK)

SOURCE: Institute of Public Policy Research, 7 Aug 2011

Child care matters: Building economic security for low income women [71] (US)

SOURCE: Women's Economic Security Campaign, 3 Aug 2011

State child care assistance policies 2011: Reduced support for families in challenging times [72] (US)

By Schulman, Karen & Blank, Helen

SOURCE: National Women's Law Centre, 11 Oct 2011

The fatherhood report 2010-11 The fairness in families index [73](UK)

SOURCE: Fatherhood Institute, 1 Dec 2010

Gender brief [74] (International)

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 4 Mar 2010

Child care: Work place and economic development supports [75] (US)

By Warner, Mildred

SOURCE: Linking Economic Development and Child Care Project at Cornell University, 16 Sep 2010

Print resources

Note: The following list of print resources was originally drawn from CRRU's reference collection CIRC, the catalogue for which is still online on the CRRU website. Unfortunately, due to budget cutbacks, this collection is not presently being maintained. To obtain copies of these documents, check your local public or academic libraries.

-Women, Politics, and Public Policy: the Political Struggles of Canadian Women By Newman, Jacquetta & White, Linda A. PUBLISHER Oxford University Press, 2006

TOBEISTIER OXIOTA OTHER SILY TTC33, 2000

- Carefair: Rethinking the responsibilities and rights of citizenship

by Kershaw, Paul

PUBLISHER University of British Columbia Press, 2005

- Ten thousand roses: The making of a feminist revolution

by Rebick, Judy

PUBLISHER Penguin Books, 2005

- Joint labor supply and child care choice decisions of married mothers

by Powell, Lisa

IN Journal of human resources, volume 37, number 1:106-127

- Child care policy at the crossroads: Gender and welfare state restructuring by Sonya Michel & Rianne Mahon (Eds.)

- Driven apart: Women's employment equality and child care in Canadian public policy by Timpson, Annis May

PUBLISHER University of British Columbia Press, March 2001

- Who cares? Women's work, childcare and welfare state redesign

by Jane Jenson & Mariette Sineau (Eds.)

PUBLISHER University of Toronto Press, 2001

- Child care, women's labour market participation and labour market policy effectiveness in Canada by Linda White

IN Canadian public policy, 2001, volume XXVII, Number 4, 385-405

- "Both wage earner and mother": Women's organizing and childcare policy in Sweden and Canada by Rianne Mahon

IN L. Briskin & M. Eliasson (Eds.), Women's organizing and public policy in Canada and Sweden, 238-279 PUBLISHER McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999

- Royal Commission as sites of resistance: Women's challenges on child care in the Royal Commission on the Status of Women

by Annis May Timpson

IN International journal of Canadian studies, 1999, volume 20, 123-148

- Benefiting Canada's children: Perspectives on gender and social responsibility by Freiler, Christa and Cerny, Judy
 PUBLISHER Status of Women Canada, March 1998
- Report of the Task Force on child care by Cooke, K., London, J., Edwards, R. and Rose-Lizée, R. PUBLISHER Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1986
- Equality in employment: A Royal Commission report by Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella
 PUBLISHER Minister of Supply and Services Canada, 1984

Useful websites

International Women's Day [76]

Status of Women Canada [77]

Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action [78]

Newfoundland & Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women [79]

PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women [80]

Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women [81]

New Brunswick Women's Council [82]

Quebec Conseil du statut de la femme [83]

Ontario Women's Directorate [84]

Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women [85]

West Coast Leaf [86]

Status of Women Council of the N.W.T. [87]

Nunavut Status of Women Council [88]

Yukon Women's Directorate [89]

United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women [90]

Source URL (modified on 24 Nov 2020): https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2%80%93-still-central-women%E2%80%99s-equality?utm_source=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_campaign=PANTHEON_STRIPPED&utm_medium=PANTHEON_STRIPPED Links

[1] https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2%80%93-still-central-women%E2%80%99s-still-central-women%E2%99s-still-central-women%E2%99s-still-central-women%E2%99s-still-central-women%E2%99s-still-central-women%E2%99s-stilequality/back [2] https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2%80%93-still-central $women\%E2\%80\%99s-equality/cana~\cite{Construction} in the property of the pro$ central-women % E2% 80% 99 s-equality/ca-0~[4]~https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-% E2% 80% 93-100% (a) the second seco $still-central-women \% E2\% 80\% 99 s-equality/inte~\cite{tentral-women} https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-\% E2\% 80\% 93-equality/inte~\cite{tentral-women} https://childhood-education-and-child-care-\% E2\% 80\% 93-equality/inte~\cite{tentral-women} https://childhood-education-and-childhood-educ$ $still-central-women\%E2\%80\%99s-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-\%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-\%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-\%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcarecanada.org/resources/issue-files/early-childhood-education-and-child-care-%E2\%80\%93-equality/prin\ [6]\ https://childcare-childhood-education-and$ still-central-women%E2%80%99s-equality/usef [7] https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/poverty [8] https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/gender [9] https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/demographics [10] https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8142 [11] https://www.policyalternatives.ca/node/12205 [12] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/14/03/global-gender-gap-report-2013 [13] https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-503-x/89-503-x2010001-eng.htm [14] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/new-brunswick/11/08/lipservice-equality~[15]~https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/06/abolishing-long-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-census-muzzles-womens-organizations~[16]~abolishing-form-cehttps://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/04/federal-election-2011-womens-equality [17] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/04/income-splitting-proposal-2011-federal-election [18] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/11/04/low-fertility-canada-nordic-model-quebec-and-us-model [19] $https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/12/women\%E2\%80\%99s-push-equality-canada-stalled-or-regressing-report~\cite{Continuous} and the continuous continuous$ $https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/11/06/womens-rights-have-declined-under-harper-researcher\ [21]$ https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/10/03/womans-perspective-canadas-place-world [22] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/10/10/career-interrupted-economic-impact-motherhood [23] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/researchpolicy-practice/09/10/women%E2%80%99s-poverty-and-recession [24] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/08/11/globalgender-gap-report-2008 [25] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/06/06/she-she-changing-patterns-women-canadian-labourforce [26] https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/canada%E2%80%99s-commitment-equality [27] https://www.cwp-csp.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2011/07/WomenandtheEqualityDeficit_Shelagh-Day-Module-4.pdf [28] https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-

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https://www.ccaac.ca/pdf/resources/briefs/CIDAWandChildCareBrief_Feb2009.pdf [31] http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-
CAN-CO-7.pdf [32] http://www.iwraw-ap.org/resources/pdf/42_shadow_reports/Canada_SR_FAFIA.pdf [33]
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