



FACT SHEET #2 – PART B

Will the FPT Agreements Achieve the Child Care Goals?

The evidence clearly shows that high quality child care that’s affordable, inclusive and available for all — in other words, universal — provides good outcomes for children, women, families, communities and the economy. Therefore, the **two key goals** for an effective publicly funded, pan-Canadian child care system are **quality** and **universality**.

But how are these goals achieved? When we look at other countries with effective child care systems, we usually see ample evidence of **adequate and sustained federal funding, good public policy and strong accountability** measures. As a result, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) has developed a 15 year plan to build a comprehensive child care system in Canada based on these principles.

Because we have federalism in Canada (that is, we have two levels of government, one federal and one provincial or territorial), governments ideally need to work together to ensure delivery of coordinated and consistent social programs, from coast to coast to coast, including child care.

There are different ways for governments to work together. While the CCAAC believes that federal legislation is most likely to advance the child care goals, it is apparent that governments have chosen to address child care through federal/provincial/territorial (FPT) agreements rather than legislation. (Factsheet #2, Part A: http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/mtc/en/pdf/mtc_factsheet2a.pdf)

The following table summarizes our assessment of the current state of development of child care in Canada through these FPT agreements, relative to the CCAAC goals outlined in the 15 year plan:

	Child Care Goals	Current Status
Public Investment	15-year plan with annual increments, reaching \$5 billion annually by year 5 and \$10 billion by year 15.	5-year plan with annual increments, reaching \$1.5 billion annually by year 5 ; further funding not committed.
Public Policy	Federal legislation with standards that guarantee quality, and universality through affordability, inclusion and accessibility ; expansion in non-profit sector; direct funding to services with 20% parental fee contribution overall.	Bi-lateral Agreements-in-Principle with some provinces; investment in regulated care required, based on principles of quality, universally inclusive , accessible and developmental; varying commitments to non-profit expansion; direct funding of services not required; universality not a clearly stated principle.
Public Accountability	Provinces and territories to develop five-year plans with goals, timelines and targets; governments report to the legislature and the public.	Provinces with bi-laterals commit to developing action plans and public reports.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why focus on the FPT agreements if they don’t have all the terms and conditions that are required to build a comprehensive system? Can they, and we, make a difference?

These current agreements reflect important child care commitments by our federal, provincial and territorial governments. Still, much more work is required to ensure that quality, affordability, inclusion and accessibility are achieved.

The CCAAC continues to advocate for federal legislation and long term federal funding commitments for child care *and* to work with our colleagues across the country to make the most of the existing FPT agreements for children, families, and the child care workforce. The CCAAC’s *Making the Connections* project will look to the public policies and investments that flow from these agreements, to show measurable progress towards achieving the child care goals.

With adequate and sustained funding in place, the existing FPT agreements form a foundation on which quality universal child care can be built — *if* provinces and territories choose to do so. Helpfully, funding under the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, and the newer bi-lateral Agreements-in-Principle, are specifically directed to **regulated** early learning and child care programs and services for children from birth to six years of age.

The FPT agreements also include government commitments to public reporting and consultation. You are entitled to this information and consultation process. This project and the related links and resources are available to support your assessment of how child care is progressing in your province or territory, and to assist you to learn more about providing input to future policy and funding directions.

The bi-lateral agreements signed so far seem quite different from each other. How can they lead to a pan-Canadian child care system?

While there are significant differences between each of the bi-lateral agreements, all commit to advancing similar goals of quality, universally inclusive, accessible and developmental early learning and child care.

In order to build a system, however, we need to move away from relying on user fees and subsidies. The evidence from other jurisdictions and systems, and Canada's experience over the last 30 years, tells us that user fees and subsidies don't ensure quality affordable child care exists for all those who need or want it. Without a fundamental shift in our approach to funding child care services, there are concerns that these agreements will likely lead to more of what we have now — a patchwork of generally underfunded programs that often pay low wages to the child care workforce and are neither affordable nor available to the majority of Canadians.

Instead, we need governments to provide funding directly to regulated centre and family-based services that are accountable for quality, affordability, inclusion and accessibility.

The new federal funding available under the bi-lateral agreements provides the momentum for starting this fundamental shift, and we are beginning to see some provincial movement towards direct funding of services. Nonetheless, much more needs to be done to ensure that public funding is accountable for advancing the shared goals of a pan-Canadian child care system.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1. Ask your elected representatives to commit to federal legislation that guarantees evidence-based and pan-Canadian standards for building a child care system.
2. Tell your elected officials about the need for long term, adequate public funding that moves us away from user fees towards direct funding of accountable, regulated child care services.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION/ADDITIONAL LINKS

Details on the CCAAC plan, Patchwork to Framework

http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/resources/pdf/framework_cc.pdf

An analysis of the importance of adequate and sustained funding and good public policy, OECD — Starting Strong: Early Childhood Education and Care, 2001

<http://www1.oecd.org/publications/e-book/9101011E.PDF>

OECD — Early Childhood Education and Care Policy: Canada, Country Note, 2004

<http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/sdc/socpol/publications/reports/2004-002619/page00.shtml>

CCAAC Fact Sheet: Universality and Accessibility

<http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca/resources/factsheets/english/universality.pdf>

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