

For immediate release

**Provincial Budget:
Parents wondering where are the new federal funds allocated for child care**

Moncton - March 31, 2005

Parents for Quality Care, a group of parents in the Greater Moncton area, wonders if the dollars allocated towards child care this year by the federal government are included in the provincial government's budget.

"Yesterday's budget raised a lot of questions" said Eugene LeBlanc, a member of *Parents for Quality Care*. "The provincial budget included an investment of \$11.8 million in the province's Early Childhood Development Agenda. Although these dollars will have a positive impact on child care in the province, I wonder where is the rest of the money that was supposed to be invested in child care."

In February, the federal government announced that new funding would be made available to the provincial and territorial governments for child care services. In fiscal year 2005-06, \$700 million dollars is being made available for provincial and territorial governments through a trust fund, pending the signing of an agreement between the federal and provincial/territorial governments. New Brunswick's portion of these dollars amounts to \$16-\$17 million.

In 2000, the federal government signed the Early Childhood Development Agreement with the provincial and territorial governments. In 2003, the New Brunswick government signed the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care. Through these two agreements, \$725 million is made available to the provincial and territorial governments. New Brunswick's portion of the dollars allocated through these agreements amounts to \$17.4 million.

"The new federal dollars allocated to child care were supposed to build a child care system across Canada, based on four principles: quality, universality, accessibility and developmental programming. Has our provincial government decided not to buy into this system?" asks LeBlanc. "Currently, only 1 in every 9 children in the province have access to licensed child care services and the fees remain unaffordable for many New Brunswick families. We could certainly use an additional \$16-\$17 million in the province to make child care services more accessible and affordable."

Parents for Quality Care was formed in March 2001 with a mandate to advocate for superior quality, accessible and affordable child care services in the Province of New Brunswick.

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