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No child care in today's Budget

OTTAWA, May 2, 2006 – The Federal Budget contains nothing for child care today and no plan for tomorrow, says the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC).

Families that can't find child care now are going to find the search harder. Some children may lose the early learning and child care they have and parents will find paying for child care just as difficult.

"This government doesn't understand the benefits of early learning and child care or how to develop it," charged the CCAAC's co-chair Debra Mayer of Winnipeg. "An allowance to parents is not an early learning program for children."

In canceling the child care agreements with the provinces, the Harper government took \$3.6-billion away from Canadian communities, Mayer said. This funding was to expand early learning and child care options for over 100,000 families; improve access, particularly for low income and rural families and for children with special needs; and enhance intervention services for children at-risk. It was particularly vicious of this government to single out aboriginal children for a \$25-million cut.

"The Harper allowance can't begin to replace what children lost in this Budget," says Jody Dallaire, the CCAAC's New Brunswick representative. "This government has failed children, but it has also denied parents the option to participate in the workforce knowing their children are safe and thriving. It has denied Canadians a solution to a shrinking workforce which is threatening the health of our economy."

The Association finds it ironic that a government that has made accountability a priority would cut mechanisms to provide accountability for early learning and child care. "The government can try to erase public dialogue by attacking research and information sharing," charged the CCAAC's executive director Monica Lysack. "However, there is no denying the vast majority of Canadians believe a national child care system is vital for Canada."

Lysack predicts that child care will continue to dog the Harper Tories. "The opposition parties, most provincial premiers, but more importantly, parents of young children recognize early learning and child care is essential for a healthy productive society. They will continue to remind the government of this. "

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