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## **Child care services essential to economic stimulus**

“A healthy economy is dependent on access to affordable child care. Parents need it whether they are working, job searching or retraining,” says Jody Dallaire of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. “Trying to build an economic stimulus package without child care services is like trying to build a skyscraper without steel.”

Canadians understand this reality. Recent polling shows that more than three-quarters of Canadians consider the lack of affordable child care to be a serious problem and 83% believe that government has an important role to play in helping parents meet their child care needs. When pushed to choose, Canadians prefer a direct investment in child care services to a monthly cheque at a rate of 2 to 1.<sup>1</sup>

In the upcoming federal budget, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC) will be looking for an investment of \$2.2 billion dollars in child care services along with a commitment to work with the provinces and territories to build community-owned, quality, affordable spaces.

Every dollar spent on improving access to quality child care brings significant returns of between \$2 and \$17. But tax cuts and market incentives like the Universal Child Care Benefit haven't worked. In fact, they've earned Canada – outside of Quebec - last place ranking from the OECD and UNICEF in terms of meeting basic early learning and child care standards. Plus, direct cash transfers to families provide no accountability for the quality and affordability of child care services that they access.

“Tax cuts and payments to parents don't build child care” says Susan Harney with the CCAAC. “Canadian families need the federal government to invest in solutions that will actually improve access to quality, affordable child care services in their communities.”

- 30 -

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<sup>1</sup> See Environics polling results at [www.ccaac.ca/pdf/resources/polls/2008EnvironicsReport\\_Attitudes\\_toward\\_child\\_care.pdf](http://www.ccaac.ca/pdf/resources/polls/2008EnvironicsReport_Attitudes_toward_child_care.pdf)  
And Nanos polling results at: <http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/October2008/09/c4801.html>