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Parties must put Canada in the running on child care

(OTTAWA) – Stephen Harper’s dismal track record on early childhood education and care (ECEC) is failing families, with Canada barely out of the starting block in comparison to the programs and services other countries provide, says Code Blue for Child Care.

The coalition today staged a “race” between nations at a local child care centre to underscore Canada’s last-place international ranking on spending and programs for children and families.

“In this election, parents are looking for progressive leadership that is in step with their lived economic stresses,” said Code Blue spokesperson, Susan Harney. “It’s shocking that a major industrialized nation is so far behind the times.”

Canada’s low ranking is cited in a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development comparing the family policies and spending of 14 developed nations.

Harney said Code Blue will be monitoring party positions on ECEC throughout the election campaign to determine which political party “can get us to the top.” The campaign issued its first report card today, showing that of all the parties, the Conservatives are the most out of touch with today’s families.

“I don’t know what Mr. Harper expects parents to do when good child care costs so much and is so hard to find,” said Michel Laflamme, a father of two young children. “A hundred dollar-a-month taxable allowance doesn’t help very much when parents face child care costs of up to \$10,000 a year—and can’t even find a space to begin with.”

Code Blue is calling for a political commitment to move from a patchwork to a child care system, with increased federal funding starting at \$1.2 billion more in the first year, and legislation to ensure the funds are used for expanding non-profit services.

“We always hear the politicians talk about how important children and families are,” said Sandra Harding, a New Brunswick parent of five. “But after all these years, we’re still waiting for action on child care. Other countries are doing it. Why can’t we?”

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CODE BLUE for child care

