

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harper Just Doesn't Get It: Canada Still Needs Child Care

OTTAWA--The Universal Child Care Benefit has nothing to do with child care and no amount of dressing it up will change the fact that Canadian families are still struggling to find affordable quality services, says the Code Blue for Child Care Campaign.

"The Harper Conservatives' announcement today to sweeten the baby bonus if elected is yet another ploy to divert attention from the fact that the government has failed families when it comes to child care," said Jody Dallaire, spokesperson for Code Blue.

The facts speak for themselves:

Harper's fiction - "True to its commitment in the 2006 federal election campaign, the Conservative Party gave child care choice to Canadian parents through the Universal Child Care Benefit, a direct payment of \$100 per month for each child under six."

The facts - Growth in child care spaces has slowed since the UCCB was introduced. Centre closings and staff shortages are rampant. And if families are lucky enough to find a child care space, fees are between \$600 and \$1,500/month. There is no evidence to show that parents who need child care have more choice – indeed, any choice.

Harper's fiction - "Enhancing the Universal Child Care Benefit is another component of the Conservatives' realistic plan to manage the economy."

The facts - Although more than \$5 billion has been spent on the UCCB, there has been no evaluation of the UCCB's effectiveness as a public expenditure. Canadians should be concerned about billions going out the door each year with no public accountability, while the child care services that we need to support our children, our families and our economy are still in crisis. This is not competent financial management.

Harper's fiction - "It is not enough to talk about wanting to help Canadian families; you need an achievable, believable plan to actually do it."

The facts - The Harper government cancelled plans for beginning to build a national early childhood education and care system in 2006. In its place, they have no child care plan at all – certainly not an "achievable, believable plan".

- 30 -

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CODE BLUE for child care

