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Minister Finley's Fiction will not save Child Care

Ottawa, Ont. – Child care experts across the country say Minister Diane Finley was wrong in her claims in the House of Commons.

Diane Finley stood up yesterday in the House of Commons and said that the Conservative government has created over 60,000 new child care spaces in the last year.

According to national data from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, 26,661 spaces were created in Canada in 2006-2007. This represents the smallest increase since 2001. "The few spaces that were created across the country can be attributed to the provinces using their own investment dollars; Quebec is the best example of this. The Federal government has simply failed to meet the child care needs of Canadian families," said Jody Dallaire, Chair and New Brunswick Director of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

"Three years ago, on February 6 2006^[1], Prime Minister Harper announced the cancellation of the early learning and child care agreements signed with the provincial and territorial governments. In total the Harper government cut \$3.6 billion to families who desperately need child care services," states Jenny Robinson, Executive Director of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care. "We are now starting to see the devastating results of these losses, Ontario municipalities alone are facing a \$63.5 million shortfall just to keep the services we have right now."

In these harsh economic times families need child care services; people can't work or re-train without it. With thousands of parents facing unemployment in the next year the loss of a child care space or subsidy is an enormous economic blow.

Finley also stated in the House of Commons that the Conservative government's Universal Child Care Benefit has worked to create new child care spaces. "The UCCB has not created one child care space. It has not improved access to child care for parents and has done nothing to build a system of early learning and care across the country," stated Susan Harney, British Columbia Director, Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

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