



## ***Conservatives' narrow win no mandate to overturn child care programs***

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The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada said today it is contesting the Conservatives' plans to overturn the child care agreements signed by the previous federal government with all 10 provinces. The group says these agreements were negotiated in good faith — it shouldn't matter whether the federal government was Liberal or another party.

“In the election, 64 % of Canadians voted for parties that support funding for early learning and child care programs while only 36% voted for the Conservatives, whose approach is different,” said Debra Mayer, CCAAC chair. “This is a clear directive from Canadians that the new government must reconsider plans to cancel federal funds committed for child care.”

Following a 2004 promise to pursue a national child care program, the Martin government committed \$5 billion over five years for provinces to develop regulated child care services. Instead, the Conservatives say they would replace this program with a taxable payment to individual parents of up to \$1,200 per child to spend as they wish. Analysts say this is more like the old “baby bonus”; it is not a child care program.

The association is not opposed to family income support programs, but advocates increases to the National Child Tax Benefit as a more equitable way to help families, especially those that need it most.

The Conservative minority will need opposition support for manoeuvring in Parliament. All the main opposition parties –and the provinces—oppose Mr. Harper's plan to cancel the child care agreements. “We expect that keeping the child care program will be a bottom line issue for all three opposition parties,” said Mayer. “Mr. Harper must reconsider his plan to reduce the child care choices available to families. Cancelling child care is no way to signal that the new government wants a cooperative working arrangement with other parties.”