



## Child care is a women's issue

Quality child care has been called the “ramp’ to women’s equality. Without it, women can’t meet their children’s needs or participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life. That’s why one of the demands of the Canadian Women’s March Coalition 2005 is a **publicly-funded and publicly accountable, non-profit, pan-Canadian child care system**. Here are just some ways child care contributes to equality.

- ◆ More and more women with children are **working** (72%). They need quality child care to study, train for jobs and work with peace of mind. Women working in the home need quality developmental experiences for their children too. All women want to know their children are in good hands.
- ◆ Women’s work is still undervalued—they still don’t have **pay equity**. Full-time working women earn only 72.5 % of men’s salaries, and some earn even less. Child care workers, for example, earn only 62% of what most women earn. Good child care helps reduce long workforce absences that lower total lifetime earnings and restrict opportunities for better jobs. It also helps young girls—as well as boys—get a good start in life and boost their chances of success in school and work later on.
- ◆ One in six children in Canada (15.6%) lives in **poverty**. More than 50% of female lone parents are poor. Access to dependable, affordable child care can help mothers improve the lives of their families. It allows them to train for jobs, and to get decent jobs and keep them.
- ◆ Too many women are in abusive or **violent** relationships. Twenty-five per cent have been attacked by their spouse over their lifetime. Child care helps children by providing them with a safe, healthy environment, and support to their mothers. Child care contributes to women’s economic independence, and that means they can more easily take themselves and their children out of bad relationships.

Good child care promotes the healthy development of all children, social inclusion and economic equity. There’s not enough good child care in Canada—we have a patchwork of inadequate, expensive services. It’s time for Canada to act on a quality, universal, inclusive, affordable and accessible child care system. **For equality now, we need child care now.**