
Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada

Annual Report 2003 – 2004

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**CHILD CARE ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
2003-2004**

Council of Child Care Advocates

Co-chairs

Christine McLean
Geographic

Jamie Kass
Sectoral

CCAAC Board: Geographic Representatives

Kismet Lowrie
Yukon Territory

Sue Delanoy
Saskatchewan

Margie Vigneault
Nova Scotia

Lynell Anderson
British Columbia

Debra Mayer
Manitoba

Christine McLean
Newfoundland and Labrador

Corine Ferguson
Alberta

Cheryl Degras
Ontario

Mary-Anne Bedard
Parent Voices Committee

Sectoral representatives

Laurel Rothman
Anti-poverty (Campaign 2000)

Anu Bose
*Immigrant/visible minority women
(National Organization of
Immigrant and Visible Minority
Women of Canada)*

James Pratt
*Students (Canadian Federation
of Students)*

Jamie Kass
*Labour (Canadian Labour
Congress, Canadian Union of
Postal Workers)*

Carol Gott
Rural child care

Janis Douglas
*Disability (Canadian Association
for Community Living)*

Margot Young
*Labour (Canadian Union of
Public Employees)*

Martha Friendly
*Research (Childcare Resource
and Research Unit)*

Women
TBA

Staff

Maryann Bird
Executive director

Connie Bringham
Membership coordinator

Gisele Jank
Administrative assistant

Consultants

Bozica Costigliola
Communications consultant

Avi Goldberg
Web and design consultant

Dianne Goldberg
Project consultant

Kerry McCuaig
Research consultant

Adele Ritch
Evaluation consultant

Jocelyne Tougas
Translator

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

June is always a season of promise and hope for me—it must stem from my gardening hobby. Being a gardener in Newfoundland, like being a child care advocate, calls for extreme optimism, hard work and a strong sense of stubbornness and determination. Over this past year, all of these characteristics have proven to be useful for all of us at CCAAC. We have optimistically forged ahead, writing proposals for funding, continuing on with our current projects and making plans for the future. We initiated and experienced some fertile discussions across the country about child care policy in our *Making the Links: Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis* project. Whenever people who are passionate about child care policy come together the conversation is never dull. Our *Parent Voices* project continued to add an important dimension to our work this year. A huge thank-you goes out to Dianne Goldberg who co-ordinated this project with an amazing sense of timing, passion, organization and wit—a formidable set of skills indeed!

This year we say good-bye and thank you to several board members who have been unwavering in their support and dedication to our organization. Corine Ferguson from Edmonton, Alberta, Margie Vigneault from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Cheryl Degras from Toronto, Ontario (Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care), have consistently and passionately represented their provinces around our table, and have done an excellent job of representing CCAAC back in their home provinces. Corine also served as the personnel chair and during her tenure has done an incredible amount of work to assist our organization to remain solid and productive. Margie, who served as treasurer, has calmly and ably helped all of us understand the financial aspects of CCAAC. We more than appreciate the efforts of these board members and we know that they will continue to be strong advocates and friends of CCAAC.

A personal note

I will also be leaving the CCAAC board this year. Over the past five years I have been involved with the association on various levels: as representative from Newfoundland and Labrador, as secretary and, over the past two years, as chairperson. It has been an honour to hold these

positions and the bonds that I have formed will last a lifetime. As I step down, I would like to particularly thank Maryann Bird for her friendship, her mentoring and her support. Maryann is the backbone of CCAAC and, at times, seems able to appear in three places at once as she runs the office, networks with partners and works with the board of directors. She does all of this with warmth and a sense of calmness that reassures all of us, regardless of the panic we might be feeling at the time. Thank you, Maryann.

During these past five years with CCAAC I have learned so much about the ups and downs and ins and outs of child care advocacy, child care policy, political machinations and political will. The work of an advocate is ongoing and I don't think any of us foresee a time when we can safely sit back and say, "There, I'm done. Everything is as it should be." Although there has been a tremendous amount of progress regarding child care since 1999, this has also been coupled with a tremendous amount of frustration. However, our voices continue to grow and our message becomes stronger and more widely supported with each passing year. The linkages we have made with our various partners and sister organizations are growing, we continue to develop various ways to effectively deliver our messages, our membership is strengthening and we are reaching more people than ever before. We must acknowledge the leadership and dedication of Jamie Kass, co-chair of the Council of Child Care Advocates, whose work has broadened the circle of child care advocates. It's been my privilege and pleasure to work with her as co-chair.

I am optimistic about the future—both for our association and for the development of a pan-Canadian, affordable, accessible, inclusive and universal system of high quality child care. There is still a great deal of work to be done but the power of this organization gives me great energy and hope which, like the rocky soil of Newfoundland, provides an excellent base to create wondrous things.

Christine McLean
CCAAC chair

FINANCIAL REPORT

CCAAC received funding for two main projects over the 2003-2004 fiscal year:

- Status of Women Canada (Women's Program) funded Making the Links and SOS: Options for Progress.
- Social Development Directorate funded the Parent Voices Network.

Our projects have supported and enriched our work and increased our outreach to sectoral partners. However, we continue to be dependent on time-limited, specific projects to maintain our advocacy initiatives. Operational

funding would provide the stability we need to develop effective long-term plans. Our membership fees and donations are critical to our work. They contribute our only source of undesignated funds.

We appreciate the advice, expertise and commitment from our accountant, Pat Graham, and our auditor, John Corey. Many thanks to our treasurer, Margie Vigneault, for her steady leadership over the past years.

Audited statements for the fiscal year are available upon request from our central office.

PERSONNEL REPORT

The personnel committee, ably led by Corine Ferguson, met several times this year to review our personnel policies, to revise job descriptions and, most importantly, to plan how to best use our limited staff resources. Our work was strengthened by an outstanding group of consultants—special thanks to Dianne Goldberg, Kerry

McCuaig, Bozica Costigliola, Avi Goldberg, Adele Ritch and Jocelyne Tougas for their expert work and patience with our challenging plans and timelines! And thanks and appreciation go to Gisele Jank for keeping the office coordinated with such good humour and hard work.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: OUR BASE IS GROWING

The CCAAC has 750 active individual and organizational members across Canada. Individual members include parents, families, and students. Organizational members include:

- child care centres
- labour unions
- pan-Canadian federations
- social policy research networks
- voluntary sector organizations both large and small
- colleges and universities
- municipalities and government organizations
- Aboriginal and First Nations groups
- social service agencies serving women and children.

CCAAC's pan-Canadian reach takes on a larger scope when the reach of our member organizations is considered. Even though the people who belong to these organizations are not reflected in the paid membership totals, they also have access to our services and publications.

GROUP	NUMBER
ADVOCATES	100,753
CHILDREN	34,779
PARENTS	30,697
CHILD CARE WORKERS	9,535
TEACHERS	1,372
STAFF	1,164
ADDITIONAL SECTORAL OUTREACH	178,300

Membership pilot

In January 2004, the CCAAC launched a new joint membership pilot with the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. Membership in both organizations is offered at a special membership rate.

Thanks!

Special thanks to Connie Brigham for her attention to detail in developing our data base capacity and her enthusiastic commitment to our work.

COMMUNICATING CHILD CARE

It's been an incredible year of pan-Canadian communication with child care advocates! In particular, we've made significant strides in getting our message out to more people in a timely way through our web site, www.childcareadvocacy.ca, and in having our information picked up and broadcast by dozens of other organizations.

Our web usage statistics show that there has been a steady increase in hits to the site this past fiscal year, with total visits numbering close to 35,000. Amazingly, the SOS discussion paper, *Making the Links: Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis*, was downloaded more than 1,000 times!

As part of our (electronic) communications strategy to keep in close contact with advocates from coast to coast we:

- Encouraged members to provide us with their e-mail addresses. We are now able to reach 50% of members electronically.
- Revamped the web site. It is more user-friendly and is updated weekly thanks to great work by our web consultant, Avi Goldberg, and project consultant, Dianne Goldberg.
- Sent out child care news clippings to CCAAC members on a regular basis to help broaden people's understanding of the politics of child care outside their own province or territory.
- Sent out occasional broadcasts to a list-serve informing people about CCAAC's activities.
- Created and posted many user-friendly advocacy tools on the web site and the Parent Voices page. These tools helped child care advocates promote our agenda for a publicly funded, high quality, accessible and inclusive child care system.
- Ensured our position on government initiatives such as the Multilateral Framework Agreement and the federal budget consultations was immediately available on the web so that advocates in the regions could send a consistent message to their communities and governments.

- Encouraged CCAAC provincial/territorial directors to use their e-mail trees as a way to get out our material to the biggest possible audience.
- Ensured all our printed material promoted our web site as a source of information.

At the same time, we realize that our communications strategies must take into account that not everyone has access to the web yet, or is comfortable using this new technology. We continue to produce documents and tools that can be used in both an electronic and print format. This past year we:

- Regularly produced and distributed our bulletin—an important outreach tool which has been hit-and-miss in previous years.
- Updated our membership brochure.
- Produced and distributed our blue business-sized cards promoting CCAAC's website address.

Our communications also included external outreach, such as our written submission to the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Finance pre-budget consultations, and personal presentations by provincial board members as the committee visited their home cities. We sent letters to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada, various premiers, and others. We conducted interviews with the media; spoke with student groups across Canada; and presented workshops or keynote events at child care conferences.

It's clear that we are in a transition phase, as we make increased use of electronic technology to send out regular and up-to-date information to child care advocates. Many thanks to communications committee chair, Debra Mayer, whose vision and perseverance led us through this phase. Based on our experience to date, the possibilities for using the web and the internet to mobilize and stay in touch with an ever-growing network of child care advocates across the country are very exciting!

MAKING THE LINKS: SEEING AND SOLVING THE CHILD CARE CRISIS

What's our plan for putting in place a progressive child care policy in Canada over the next 10 to 15 years?

That's the overall question the CCAAC set out to answer this past year with the Making the Links Project. We wanted to develop a long-term, comprehensive strategy that would allow us to build public support and lead to government action. We also felt strongly that the strategy should come out of a collective process that included the diverse voices of groups, organizations and individuals working in areas related to child care or whose lives were directly affected by it. We wanted this to be a process that engaged advocates and new sectors in discussing child care policy so that we could build capacity and help activists develop their regional positions on child care.

Our discussion paper, *Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis: Options for Progress*, was the guide for the consultation process. Written by research consultant Kerry McCuaig, the paper looked at eight policy lessons that came out of a four-year study of early learning and child care services in 12 countries. *Options for Progress* outlined how Canada was doing in the eight lessons (poorly, unfortunately), provided some choices for child care policy and posed challenging questions to address policy gaps and identify priorities.

“Our group had a lively discussion and could have gone on for hours. It was a great way to get at what people are thinking about child care.”

Facilitators who were involved in the consultations had a discussion manual, discussion notes and a slide presentation to use for their sessions, which took place throughout the first several months of 2004. There was also an option for individuals to download the discussion

paper and provide feedback online through CCAAC's web site. Facilitators reported that discussions on the paper were stimulating and engaging.

The paper was distributed widely through regular mail and made available at conferences, workshops and other events. A key component of the project, which was funded by Status of Women Canada (Women's Program), was an extensive evaluation of the consultations. Here are a few of the findings compiled by evaluation consultant Adele Ritch:

- 71% of participants strongly agreed and 28% somewhat agreed that the paper and the consultation process had given them a better understanding of child care policy.
- 58% strongly agreed and 38% somewhat agreed that they now have a better idea of how child care policy affects the lives of women in Canada.
- 32% of respondents said they intend to become more involved in the child care advocacy movement. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents said they would remain involved.

This was a truly exciting process. As one participant noted, “Our group had a lively discussion and could have gone on for hours. It was a great way to get at what people are thinking about child care.”

We expect that our final report will contain a practical and visionary road map for a high quality, inclusive and publicly funded child care system in Canada. We look forward to working with a growing number of strong allies to build support for our strategy and find ways to make sure governments respond with action on child care.

PARENT VOICES: MAKING THE CASE FOR CHILD CARE

When CCAAC launched Parent Voices, we said we wanted to bring parents together so that they would be united and strong when making the case for a high quality, publicly funded child care system accessible to all. More than two years later, parents are more committed than ever to child care advocacy.

With funding from the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program, the project activities in 2003-2004 reflect a growing momentum:

- The virtual network from coast to coast to coast continued to expand.
- The Parent Voices Resource Kit was so popular that it went into its second printing.
- The project developed new educational resources, pan-Canadian fact sheets and material to help parents participate in consultations around *Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis*.
- The Parent Voices web site continued to be updated with information and tools to support parents in their advocacy work and to feature voices of parents.

This past year there were many more opportunities to involve parents in advocacy. One of these was the "Memo to Martin", calling on the new prime minister to champion child care when he took office. Parents also:

- Lobbied their MPs, MLAs and MPPs on child care policies and funding.
- Submitted briefs to federal and provincial budget consultations.
- Wrote letters to news editors in support of a high quality child care system.
- Provided input into the CCAAC's consultations on a child care policy for Canada.

Parent perspectives valued

One of the most important results of the project was integrating parent perspectives into advocacy at various levels. The five parent representatives were an essential part of the Council of Child Care Advocates. The representatives were Clare Bessell from Newfoundland and Labrador; Jody Dallaire from New Brunswick; Sheri Hincks from Ontario; Donna Riddell from Manitoba; and Sharon Gregson from British Columbia. Their participation at

meetings was highly valued and they made important connections for the project with other sectors. For example, organized labour ensured that Parent Voices information was distributed to union members.

Parents in the regions

During the project, parents also initiated and supported provincial child care campaigns in five regions and parent involvement continued as a key element of regional child care advocacy. Parent Voices has developed a strong network of people who share ideas and support each other; campaigns or strategies that are successful in one region often get picked up and adapted for other areas.

The project has certainly raised awareness among parents about the complexities of child care policy and funding and how Canada could move forward. Many parents are keen to ensure that their perspectives are reflected in debates during the federal election campaign and in subsequent government policy and funding.

PARENTS SPEAK OUT

"The resource kits are fabulous and gave me the background, terminology and confidence to speak knowledgeably about the issues from more than a parent perspective."

"It's important for us to know that we are connected with a pan-Canadian organization. To actually know people from the different places, and to get to hear about and understand the child care issues in all of these places ... I feel so much more a part of Canada."

What's ahead

CCAAC will continue to explore opportunities for funding Parent Voices work. Meanwhile, the association will use its limited resources to sustain as much of the network as possible, and to involve parents in public education and child care advocacy activities. This will include parent representation on the Council of Child Care Advocates.

On a personal note, I would like to thank all of the dedicated parents who are part of our growing pan-Canadian network of child care advocates. I feel very privileged to have worked with all of you and to have learned so much from you. We can be proud of our accomplishments!

Dianne Goldberg
Project Consultant

FROM THE COUNCIL OF CHILD CARE ADVOCATES

It's been a good news, bad news cycle this past year for child care, and that means it's been a challenging time for the Council of Child Care Advocates.

The main victory—one that child care advocates can take credit for helping to achieve—is that child care is now a line item in the federal budget and there are new committed dollars in the next two years. But funding for child care is still woefully inadequate, and provincial and territorial governments aren't accountable for spending federal dollars on high quality, regulated child care. As a result, the child care crisis is deepening in many regions.

Hard at work on these critical issues, CCAAC lobbied tirelessly for accountability and increased funding. We also attended the budget lock-up and helped produce a CCAAC analysis of what the budget meant for child care. It's clear that we need to keep pressing for more money, and for strong mechanisms to ensure that early childhood development dollars are used for child care.

Vote for child care!

As you read this report, the federal election is only days away. We've done a lot of fundraising during this period and produced a package of election support materials for advocates to use, including window signs, fact sheets and information on party platforms.

Throughout the campaign, we made determined efforts to ensure that child care was raised as an issue and that the candidates understood that federal leadership is needed to provide Canada's children with the high quality child care that is their right.

Outreach works

One of our key priorities in 2003-04 has been to reach out to a broad base of organizations and individuals who believe that Canada needs a high quality, inclusive, publicly funded child care system.

During the *Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis* (SOS) consultation process, we not only heard from the child care workforce, but also parents, trade unionists, and women's and anti-poverty groups. Individuals were also able to be a part of the discussion via the web site's online feedback feature. These discussions gave the CCAAC valuable input for shaping a long-term, progressive strategy for child care. Another benefit is that we developed strong new allies across Canada.

Through sectoral seats on the council or through partnerships, we've also made links this past year with more parents, the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, Rural Voices and the disability community, to name a few.

I must say it's been a pleasure to work with so many wonderful and committed parent advocates through the Parent

Voices Project. The tools the project developed were incredibly useful and user-friendly, and we need to do more to get them widely distributed. It has also been wonderful to have rural child care perspectives on the council—and eye-opening to hear about the challenges that families face in rural areas.

There are more voices at our table now. However, we have to ensure that the women's movement is included, particularly since child care is primarily a women's equity issue. In addition, we still have a lot of work to do to reach out to youth and francophones outside of Québec. We also need to increase our ties with aboriginal peoples—to talk to them about how we might work with and be responsive to their constituency.

Working more closely with child care advocates in Québec is another priority area. We can learn a great deal from the experience of trade unions, women's organizations, community groups and Les centres de la petite enfance (CPEs) who have worked in coalition first to push for, and now to defend, publicly funded child care.

Through the SOS consultation process and efforts to involve more sectors on the council itself, we've strengthened and enriched our advocacy movement. This in turn is building our profile, enhancing our ability to get our message out and magnetizing more and more people whose lives are directly affected by the child care crisis.

This coming year, we need to focus on ways to engage people between council meetings—to build on the inclusive process begun by the SOS discussion paper. We'll have a well-grounded policy document and strategy coming out of this process, and we need to find new and innovative ways to get this information out to a range of groups and organizations.

A good-bye

It's been a wonderful experience to work alongside Council of Advocates co-chair, and CCAAC chair, Christine McLean. Christine is truly dedicated to child care advocacy and I know that I speak for all council members when I say that we will miss her, but look forward to continuing our advocacy work with her in other ways.

It hasn't been an easy year, but there's at least one reason to take heart. More and more, groups and individuals are deciding that standing alongside others to defend the right of Canada's children to high quality child care is the only way that we will get results. Our movement is growing and getting stronger by the day.

Jamie Kass

Council of Child Care Advocates co-chair