

# Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada

**BULLETIN**

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## A message from the Chair

If there was ever a time to step up the pressure for child care in Canada, it's now. There's been lots of momentum over the past year, and we have to build on it as we go into a federal election. Accessible, affordable, publicly funded, high quality child care needs to go on the political front burner.

As some recent provincial elections have shown, some politicians seem to care more about things like car insurance than children. It's also clear that we can't take anything for granted – hard-won gains can be taken away. We are all watching anxiously to see what the Charest government in Québec will do to \$5-a-day child care.

Our new project, *Making the Links/Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis*, will help us in our advocacy efforts. (See the article in this newsletter.) It will spark discussion on options for progress in child care, build advocacy from coast to coast to coast and give us opportunities to convey our position on child care.

We'll also continue our work around the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care, pressing for more money and for strong accountability mechanisms to ensure that federal funding flows directly to improving regulated child care in every province and territory.

This issue of the newsletter also reports on our Parent Voices project. Even though project funding is winding down, we hope to keep the Parent Network actively involved. The parents are incredible advocates, and the project has been invigorating for all of us.

## Good-bye, and welcome

At our annual meeting in June, we said goodbye to **Rita Chudnovsky**, founding chair of the Council of Child Care Advocates. Rita's leadership has been outstanding, wonderful, marvelous – we will miss her very much! She made a tremendous contribution to the CCAAC in so many different ways, and saw us through many challenging times. We wish Rita all the best and know that we will be working with her to press for publicly funded child care.

We welcome **Jamie Kass** as Council of Advocates Co-chair and labour representative on the Board of Directors. Jamie has a 25-year history of organizing and bargaining for child care workers, and advocating for a universal child care system.

It's exciting to welcome two new board members, **Lynell Anderson**, representing British Columbia, and Yukon representative, **Kismet Lowrie**.

We have a great team! And we're looking forward to making it even bigger and better by joining with child care advocates in every region to say to the politicians: It's time for publicly funded child care now.

Christine McLean  
Chair

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*Funding to support the work of the CCAAC is provided by Status of Women Canada (Women's Program), and by Human Resources Development Canada.*

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## Parent Voices stronger than ever

Truly fabulous. Encouraging. Supportive. A driving force. That's how parents describe their involvement in the Parent Voices project and in making the case for quality, affordable and accessible child care.

"Before I became involved in Parent Voices, I'm not sure I could have given you a good definition of 'quality child care,'" said Sheri Hincks, Parent Chair of the University of Guelph Child Care and Learning Centre.

Since then, Sheri has written letters to the editor, lobbied politicians and worked to put high quality child care on the Ontario election agenda. When Parent Voices put together a sample brief for the federal pre-budget consultations, Sheri ran with it. She circulated a draft and submitted the final brief endorsed by 90 parents and staff at the child care centre.

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Her story is typical of the parents who have become involved in the project.

Jody Dallaire, spokesperson for Parents for Quality Care in Moncton, N.B., credits Parent Voices with making all the difference.

"Luckily, Parent Voices came along," she said. "We raised public and political awareness with the provincial election campaign. With the budget watch, we were in the media and developed relationships with a number of media outlets who contact us periodically for comments on the child care sector."

In Manitoba, Donna Riddell got involved because "I realized how important and how possible it is to effect change in the broader arena."

In Newfoundland, Clare Bessell said that through Parent Voices "I was learning what the big picture was all about and how I could start to get things moving in the province." She shared information and linked with other parents, and campaigned on child care in the provincial election.

In British Columbia, Sharon Gregson said "the project has provided opportunities for parents to become more educated and informed about what is happening to child care services, what could and should be happening, what families need and deserve."

Said Mary-Anne Bedard, former Parent Voices liaison to the CCAAC Board: "Parent Voices has been a tremendous vehicle for parents to hone their message and feel their collective strength."

### Tools for change

Parents knew what they wanted from the project, said Parent Voices Project Consultant, Dianne Goldberg. "They told us we could help by providing advocacy tools and information."

The Parent Voices Web page on the CCAAC site became *the* place to go for all kinds of advocacy resources, and parents signed up to receive information about child care issues, activities, campaigns and advocacy tools.

Dianne is pleased that the project developed a solid parent network. "Our plan now is to explore ways for the virtual network to stay connected and to involve parents in child care advocacy."

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*Parent Voices: Making the Case for Child Care was funded by the Social Development Partnerships Program of Human Resources Development Canada.*

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## Join Us!

It's time to renew your membership in the CCAAC. If you're not already a member, please consider joining. Fill in the enclosed membership form or use our online form ([www.childcareadvocacy.ca](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca)).

Members can also sign up to receive our e-mail broadcasts and child care news clippings. Let us know you're interested. Send your name and e-mail address to [info@childcareadvocacy.ca](mailto:info@childcareadvocacy.ca).

[www.childcareadvocacy.ca](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca)

If you haven't visited our web site lately, don't delay! We've made lots of changes (see our home page for details), and it's updated weekly to bring you current child care news.

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## COUNCIL OF CHILD CARE ADVOCATES

### *Co-chairs*

Christine McLean <i>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</i>	Jamie Kass <i>Labour</i>
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Maryann Bird  
*Executive Director*

## CCAAC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Making it happen

### *Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis: Options for Progress*

It's time for advocates from every region to come together and develop a child care strategy for Canada. That's what the CCAAC's discussion paper, *Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis: Options for Progress*, is all about. It's an opportunity for all of us to collectively help shape a strategy that ensures every child in Canada has access to high quality, publicly funded child care. **It can't happen without you, so please get involved.**

*Options for Progress* looks at eight policy lessons that came out of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) early learning and child care services reports. The policy lessons range from a universal approach to access and equal partnership with the education system, to appropriate training and working conditions for child care staff, and a participatory approach to quality improvement. The discussion paper outlines options for child care policy and poses questions to address policy gaps and identify priorities.

Over the coming year, we will use the discussion paper to guide child care consultations across Canada:

- We'll hold regional consultations in a group setting.
- You can provide individual feedback through our web site ([www.childcareadvocacy.ca](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca)), where the paper will be posted and a feedback form available for electronic responses.
- The paper will be distributed widely through regular mail and be available at conferences, workshops and other events.

We want to find workable answers to big questions. What would a pan-Canadian policy framework contain? How would it promote quality, inclusion and respect for diversity? What would it cost? How could it be made accountable? How could it be regionally sensitive yet ensure every child has equal access? The answers to these questions and more will form the basis of a comprehensive child care strategy paper. Our goal is ambitious: to develop a 10- to 15-year plan for putting in place a system of early learning and child care to give all children a good start in life, regardless of their parents' workforce participation or their socio-economic status; and to help parents, especially mothers, balance their work and family responsibilities.

We want to produce a practical road map that will enable us to build public support and spark long-needed government action. Working together, we can develop a solid plan for child care and show governments that it *can* be done.

#### TIMELINES

*Our goal is to have a final strategy paper by spring 2004. Regional consultations will begin in December 2003, with a deadline for initial feedback in March 2004.*

For more information, call (613) 594-3196 or e-mail: [info@childcareadvocacy.ca](mailto:info@childcareadvocacy.ca).

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*Seeing and Solving the Child Care Crisis: Options for Progress is funded by Status of Women Canada*

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