

September 20, 2008

Code Blue for Child Care

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to respond to your open letter as Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

I agree that this federal election is a very important one for Canada; Canadians are facing a choice between two radically different visions of our countries' future. One vision - that child care comes in the form of a cheque in the mailbox, leaving children and parents out in the cold - is a stark contrast to the Liberal vision. We value the importance of parenting young children and believe our children's well-being is a shared responsibility.

Our long-term goal is coast-to-coast high-quality, universal, community-based, early education and child care. We have committed to a first phase of rebuilding the national child care program, in which federal funds will be transferred to provinces and territories for early education and child care, ramping up to \$1.2 billion annually by the fourth year.

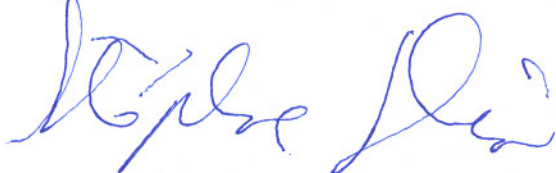
We are very proud of the child care agreements that were negotiated with all ten provinces, including Quebec. We are committed to working with the provinces and territories again to ensure that increased investments in early education and child care are accountable, meeting the standards for quality, universality, accessibility, and developmental education that we develop together.

The first year of a baby's life is a precious time and we recognize the benefits for parents to be with their babies as much as possible. We are proud of the improvements we have made to maternity and parental leave, extending it to one year. Recognizing the diverse needs of families, we will continue to improve on this important family policy, making it more flexible to meet families' needs.

I share your deep disappointment that Stephen Harper destroyed the progress on early education and child care that we achieved together. I assure you that a Liberal government will once again work with you as partners in the community to ensure that we achieve our goal of early education and child care for every child.

There is only one party that has delivered on child care and will do so again - the Liberal Party of Canada.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Stéphane Dion, P.C., M.P.
Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada