

Dear Prime Minister Martin and Minister Dryden:

As you know, the government of Alberta has indicated that it is reluctant to sign the proposed federal/provincial/territorial child care agreement on February 11. Instead, it wants to take federal funds meant for child care with no strings attached.

Allowing Alberta to take federal dollars without being accountable for using the funds to meet the QUAD principles would fly in the face of your government's stated commitment to child care. Canadians' expectations are high for an agreement that transforms the current patchwork of services into a universal, high quality, public early learning and child care system. Children and families must not be held hostage to jurisdictional wrangling.

Canadians are looking to your government to provide the necessary leadership to deliver on child care. Under the Social Union Framework Agreement, the federal government can introduce a new social program with the support of a minimum of six provinces. Other provinces and territories are willing to come to the table, so let's get on with it. Canadians are losing patience with governments that keep putting obstacles in the way of making real progress on the development of a child care system for Canada.

With respect to Quebec, we would like to make our position clear that there is no comparison to be made with the Alberta situation. As your government has already stated, Quebec's existing child care system is a model for other jurisdictions to emulate because it already meets the QUAD principles. Your government should support Quebec to deliver its system, and act to provide Canadians with child care services equivalent to those that Quebec provides to its citizens.

Canadians are counting on your government to do the right thing on February 11. We urge you to hold firm and move forward with the provinces and territories that are willing to negotiate a child care agreement that contains legislation, adequate public funding, concrete accountability measures and future expansion in the non-profit sector.

Sincerely,

Debra Mayer

Jamie Kass

Co-chairs  
CCAAC  
Council of Advocates