

**CHILD CARE ADVOCACY
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
(CCAAC)**



**L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE POUR LA
PROMOTION DES SERVICES DE GARDE
À L'ENFANCE
(ACPSGE)**

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Dear Member of Parliament,

The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada is a pan-Canadian, non-profit, membership-based organization dedicated to promoting quality child care accessible to all. We are writing to you as Parliament resumes because we care about the future of Canada's children. We also care about democracy, and are concerned that the framework for Canada's new child care system—our first new social program in a generation—is going to be decided by federal, provincial and territorial ministers behind closed doors.

This important initiative should be debated in Parliament, and we hope that you will raise this in the House of Commons prior to the February 11 federal/provincial/territorial meeting of ministers responsible for child care in Vancouver.

In its October 2004 Throne Speech, the federal Liberal government said that “the time has come for a truly national system of early learning and child care.” We urge you to ensure that Parliament, in consultation with the child care community, helps Canada meet that commitment by supporting a new system built on these widely-accepted principles:

1. A publicly funded, publicly delivered, sustainable system that provides quality child care parents can count on and afford. Government should provide most of the funding directly to programs, giving them a stable operating base. In Quebec, for example, parents pay a maximum \$7 a day and government pays the rest.
2. A Child Care Act that guarantees standards and the principles of quality, universality, accessibility, developmental programming and inclusiveness.
3. Public accountability mechanisms tied to provincial and territorial five-year plans that contain goals, timelines and targets, and a way to regularly measure real progress in the development of quality child care services.
4. Money for children, so that in the future every public dollar goes directly into services to support quality and prevent challenges by corporate child care chains under international trade agreements. Services should be expanded in the non-profit sector, with a transition plan developed for existing commercial operators.

These fundamentals come out of 30 years of international experience, research, practice and advocacy in early learning and child care. They are what we need in order to lay a strong foundation for the development of a child care system that is good for children, supports parents and families, and contributes to Canada's social and economic health.

Fully 90% of Canadians support a pan-Canadian child care plan that ensures that all children have access to quality child care regardless of family income, disability, race or where they live.

In recent weeks, child care advocates from coast to coast to coast have been sending this message to Ottawa and their provincial/territorial child care ministers as part of the CCAAC's **Building Blocks Campaign**. (For more information about the campaign, and the CCAAC position paper, From Patchwork to Framework, please visit www.childcareadvocacy.ca.)

We hope you will act to ensure that our elected parliamentarians play a role in shaping and debating this important new social program—for democracy's sake and for our children's future. In this way, we can work together to build a national child care system, and to build it right, from the start.

Sincerely,

Debra Mayer

Jamie Kass

Co-Chairs
CCAAC Council of Child Care Advocates