

CHILD CARE SPACES INPUT - 2006

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PRINCIPLES

1-EQUALITY

2-INCLUSION

3-THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

4-PARENTAL DETERMINATION OF THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

5-CAPACITATE THE "VILLAGE" IT TAKES TO RAISE A CHILD

INTRODUCTION

ALL children need care and care spaces all the time 24/7/365 not just while parents are away at paid jobs.

Children are cared for and learn in many spaces: home, relatives' and friends' homes, parks, libraries, malls, shops, restaurants, public transit, streets, sidewalks, back allies, religious institutions, entertainment centres, beaches, community centres, pools, ponds, gardens, forests...

We seek to hold the government to their PROGRESSIVE, INCLUSIVE vision and new direction for child care.

We seek an end to discrimination against parental child care and against parental determination of child care.

The government did not promise funding for "government-regulated daycare centre spaces". It promised funding for "child care spaces."

DEFINITIONS

*CHILD CARE is defined inclusively as 'the care of a child'

*a CHILD CARE SPACE is defined inclusively without restriction as "the spaces where children are cared for and learn."

REQUIREMENT OF INCLUSION and NON- DISCRIMINATION

No one receiving government funding can be allowed to distribute money, goods, and/or services in a discriminatory fashion. This would be in compliance with Charter rights, UN Convention on Rights of the Child, UN Declaration of Human Rights.

ENACT LEGISLATION BANNING EXCLUSIVE DEFINITIONS OF 'CHILD CARE'

We need to eliminate the wide-spread confusion caused by the duplicitous use of definitions of "Early Learning and Child Care." The problem is the use of 2 very different definitions of 'child care':

The INCLUSIVE definition includes all forms of care and learning situations - including parental care, grandparent care, prenatal classes, Kindergarten, Sunday school, daycare centres, preschool, music lessons, information, mother-baby drop-ins, swim class, etc. This definition is the one used truthfully in statements such as: "overwhelming evidence shows that children benefit from high quality ELCC." Or: "The vast majority support ELCC." This is the definition implicit in the "Preamble" to the 2005 ELCC Agreements.

However, the EXCLUSIVE definition is the one used in determining FUNDING. Here ELCC/ECEC/ECD, etc means 'government-monitored daycare and preschool' and especially daycare centres, as well as the massive related bureaucracy, training, capital, research, and lobbying costs. This is the definition used in the "Investments" section of the 2005 ELCC Agreements in Principle.

INCREASING & IMPROVING CHILD CARE SPACE

Capacitate the “village” it takes to raise a child

Our physical and social environments/spaces are often ill-suited to providing for children’s best interests and optimal development, and for their adult care-ers interests too. Also, our “village” has lost information - cultural wisdom - regarding children’s development. We can increase and improve child care capacity by addressing these 2 issues. Funding space in daycare preferentially is exclusionary, funding a few at the expense of capacitating more truly publicly accessible “village” spaces.

The non-profit daycare lobby opposes funding the private care businesses of all sizes and also opposes equitably funding the family sector. It should be noted that the non-profit daycare sector is a part of the private corporate sector. The public cannot freely access their resources. They operate in many ways like businesses in terms of lobbying clout, remuneration of Executive Directors, and lack of public accountability.

A HOLISTIC, 2-PART APPROACH

- 1-Funding for capital infrastructure (equipment, buildings, fences, etc) that benefits local children
- 2-Funding for child care information infrastructure that benefits all Canadians

1-CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mechanism for funding

REFUNDABLE TAX CREDITS combine ‘tax credit’ with ‘grant’ concept. Taxable entities get reduced taxes, non-taxable entities get a rebate/grant. Non-profit societies currently get GST rebates: these child care space credits/grants are comparable to that as in terms of administration. Similarly, non-taxable (low income) individuals get the Child Tax Benefit and GST rebate.

Determining whom to fund

- whomever PARENTS designate
- income tax forms could be used to do this - eg "assign child care space credits for 3 children to _____".
- parent could designate self
- could designate a business such as daycare, music teacher, nanny, preschool, café, etc.
 - Many parents are self-employed (home business, farmers). These are businesses that can be eligible for funding. Many are very small and are not registered businesses.
- could designate registered non-profits: eg. 4H, synagogue, daycare, Scouts, etc.
- could designate local or provincial government

Determining amount of funding

Parents designate funding on a per capita (per child in specified age range).

UNIVERSAL APPROACH

There are (CRRU *ECEC 2004*) about:

2,040,000 children age 0-5

4.8 million 0-12.

The \$250 million for space means about:

\$125 each for age 0-5

or \$52 each for 0-12.

TARGETED APPROACH

If “targeted” or “focused” rather than “universal” approaches are deemed appropriate, total funding would be divided by the number of children in families receiving the Child Tax Benefit OR the smaller number receiving the National Child Benefit Supplement. This would make the credit amount of greater dollar value per child.

SAMPLE LIST OF ELCC CAPITAL EXPENDITURES

stream/enviro cleaning/rehabilitation (for play/learning/safety)	baby/toddler gates
install breastfeeding priority benches/rocking chairs	misc 'child-proofing'
install sidewalk stroller/cycle ramp	strollers
install stroller/wheel chair ramp for buses	baby/child carrier/backpack
install diaper change area	tricycle, bicycle, child bike seat, bike trailer
install "crying room" (theatre, cinema, religious bldg)	sports & arts equipment
baby/child car seat - (eg taxi company, family)	piano, musical instruments
fence/wall for play area (eg for parks)	garden and equip

CONCERNS: ACCOUNTABILITY

If it is deemed necessary to account for how funds are spent by the designated recipient that could be asked and briefly stated on income tax form. It can be require that receipts be kept or submitted. Revenue Canada is equipped to do auditing as needed.

If funds are to be restricted to CAPITAL COSTS some examples would be: piano, seating for breast-feeding mothers, sterilizing equipment, crying room, stroller ramp, car seats, fence, gates, car seats, baby-proofing, playroom, rent, stove, heater, house, bicycle, furniture, yard, repairs, addition to home, flooring, vehicle, garden, repairs, etc.

CONCERNS: FUNDING INDIVIDUALS

IF it is decided to disallow assigning credit/grant to individual families/parents, it could be required that parents form and apply jointly as an unregistered co-op/group/collective of at least (say) 5 children OR 5 families. This would help to promote/reward collective/social responsibility and social inclusion (as in 'it takes a village').

CONCERNS: UNREGISTERED NON-PROFIT ENTITIES

IF it is deemed that only formally registered non-profits can receive these credit-grants, then registered groups such as churches, Kids First Parent Association, 4H , Farm associations could be designated as recipients for funds and/or supplies and distribute these to members without setting up permanent 'centres'.

CONCERNS: ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE SPACE CAPITAL

In addition to this \$250 million, government should fund child care space expenditures in fully accessible public spaces such as pools, parks, rinks, public theatres, buses/transit, libraries, community centres, sidewalks. This will create more spaces where child care and learning can take place. Needed are: clean streams and soil, stroller ramps, fences, gates, Dutch doors, change tables, crying rooms, benches, trees, etc.

2- INFORMATION INRASTRUCTURE

A-CREATE A WEBSITE LISTING ALL PROVIDERS OF ALL CHILD CARE/LEARNING/ DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- The Federal Government could provide a "one stop shop" FAMILY/CHILD SERVICES WEBSITE:
- ANY provider of such services could get listed: babysitters, dance teachers, daycares, community centres, language schools, home school associations, therapists, etc.
- organized by province and then by city/area and type of service
- Providers would be responsible for sending in very basic info and contacts and updating it yearly.
- The Federal Gov't would take no responsibility for monitoring listed services.

BENEFITS TO WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EQUALITY: women's/mothers'/parents' micro in-home and small businesses often lack advertising ability - this would be a non-paternalistic help for those with low income.

B – A PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

- similar to anti-smoking or pro-exercise campaigns
- run by developmental scientists such as Dr Gordon Neufeld, Dr Jay Belsky
- areas: breast-feeding; parent-child attachment, adult-child attachment; peers; harms: toxins, electronic media, junk food; etc
- could include: web-site, posters, bill boards, public forums, films, TV/print ads, special events, info-sheets put in government mailings such as tax assessments, brochures handed out in maternity packages