

KIDS FIRST PARENT ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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COMMENTARY ON THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE:

DAYCARE, 'WORK' AND WOMEN

By Helen Ward

Below is an excerpt from the latest Speech from the Throne by the federal government under the Liberal Party of Canada with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

The Liberal Party promised 'universal child care' in the 2006 election and came under fire when a lead staffer said funding parents directly was a mistake because parents would spend the money on "beer and popcorn". They lost that election to the Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper which promised the Universal Child Care Benefit of a taxable \$100/month/child age 0-6 to all families.

In 2015 the Liberals won back power with a promise to increase funding directly to families with a revamped Canada Child Benefit, with no mention of daycare funding even though that had been expected.

Again in the 2019 federal election there was no talk of daycare funding and the Liberals won a second term.

Now, between elections, the Liberals have made the vote-losing error of promising more money for daycare rather than for families themselves.

With Covid-19 concerns about contagion shutting down university and school classes, gatherings, businesses, medical services, etc. this decision to promote and increase institutional care of babies and young children makes no sense whatsoever. Little ones are incapable of social distancing or maintaining hygiene protocols or wearing masks. Parents know this.

Peer-reviewed empirical research shows conclusively that children in group care settings suffer far more and worse illnesses than other children. The Swedish government found that children in institutional care were 6.78 times more likely to be sick than children cared for by their family. Daycare centres have been found to be the source of anti-biotic resistant 'super-bugs', and were reportedly called the "open sewers of the 20th century" by an epidemiologist.

Moreover, the crude push increase preferential funding for daycare in order to increase mothers' time in paid work blatantly disregards mothers' diverse situations and preferences. The government's misogynistic, myopic, evidence-ignoring, undemocratic framing of 'gender equity' has replaced the goal of 'women's liberation'.

Corporations and banks support preferential daycare funding because they benefit from new profit-making opportunities that arise with daycare funding and with treating the negative health impacts daycare causes, and also from an artificially swollen labour supply that reduces wage demands. Unions see opportunities to expand membership and power. The anti-family ideologues backed by corporations, banks, and union gloat over the realization of their 'new order' dystopian vision of 'the new child', 'the public child'.

Families, and women and children themselves are ignored as these powerful 'stakeholders' drive an agenda that has very little voter buy-in.

VIDEO

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/throne-speech-child-care-1.5735899>

SPEECH TEXT

Women in the Economy

Women – and in particular low-income women – have been hit hardest by COVID-19. This crisis has been described as a She-cession.

Many women have bravely served on the frontlines of this crisis, in our communities or by shouldering the burden of unpaid care work at home.

We must not let the legacy of the pandemic be one of rolling back the clock on women's participation in the workforce, nor one of backtracking on the social and political gains women and allies have fought so hard to secure.

The Government will create an *Action Plan for Women in the Economy* to help more women get back into the workforce and to ensure a feminist, intersectional response to this pandemic and recovery. This Plan will be guided by a task force of experts whose diverse voices will power a whole of government approach.

It has been nearly 50 years since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women outlined the necessity of child care services for women's social and economic equality. We have long understood that Canada cannot succeed if half of the population is held back. Canadians need more accessible, affordable, inclusive, and high quality childcare.

Recognizing the urgency of this challenge, the Government will make a significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system.

The Government will build on previous investments, learn from the model that already exists in Quebec, and work with all provinces and territories to ensure that high-quality care is accessible to all.

There is broad consensus from all parts of society, including business and labour leaders, that the time is now.

The Government also remains committed to subsidizing before- and after-school program costs. With the way that this pandemic has affected parents and families, flexible care options for primary school children are more important than ever.

The Government will also accelerate the Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy, which has already helped women across Canada grow their businesses.