

Affordable child care

“The time has come for a truly national system of early learning and child care, a system based on the four key principles that parents and child care experts say matter – quality, universality, accessibility and development.”

Speech from the Throne
as delivered, October 4, 2004

The Canadian Labour Congress welcomes the federal government's renewed commitment to guaranteeing the right of all Canadian children to early childhood education and care. For many years, we have been part of the campaign for a high- quality universal child care program for Canada's children.

Introducing a progressive design for a pan-Canadian universal child care plan and putting forward an initial commitment of **\$1 billion in the 2005-2006 federal budget** to provincial programs that meet its requirements is quite simply the right thing to do.

We urge the government to move quickly to enact legislation that guarantees standards, accountability and funding for early learning and child care in every Canadian jurisdiction. The legislation should firmly establish the following principles:

Child care must be universally accessible and inclusive, not targeted. All children benefit from quality child care regardless of their abilities or backgrounds.

Public and non-profit child care is the priority. Services can be planned and every dollar of public money goes into child care not profits.

Cost must not be a barrier to access. Follow the Quebec model to ensure that parents can afford to pay.

To ensure quality care for Canada's kids, **child care must be adequately funded, staffed and regulated.**

The federal government has an important opportunity to lay the groundwork for what we believe is a tremendous step forward for all of Canada's children, their families and our society.

We look forward to working with you toward these important objectives.

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