

***Child Care
Advocacy
Forum***

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Organizations:***

BC Association
of Child Care
Services

Coalition of
Child
Care Advocates
of BC

Early Childhood
Educators of BC

School Aged
Child
Care Association

Westcoast Child
Care Resource
Centre

Western Canada
Family Child
Care Association
of BC

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TAX CUTS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR
NATIONAL CHILD CARE PROGRAM**

Yesterday, Paul Martin, the federal Minister of Finance told Canadians that we can expect budget surpluses, totaling \$95.5 billion over the next 5 years. He called on Canadians to let him know how we think the surplus should be spent.

Since then, the airwaves have been given over to those who see tax cuts as the single most important priority. They claim to speak for the majority, but recent polls indicate that, when given open-ended choices, Canadians would rather see our surplus invested in social programs like Medicare, education, job creation, child poverty, child care, and debt reduction.

There are those who argue that tax cuts are the best way to support families with young children. They suggest that if Canadians paid lower taxes, one parent could afford to stay at home and care for young children or that families would be able to afford child care services. However, Marc Lee of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives points out:

“Previous examples of provincial tax cuts in Canada, and federal and state tax cuts in the US, haven’t made a real difference for average income families. A typical family might save enough money to buy a cup of coffee every day but certainly not enough to meet their child care needs.”

Canadians are being misled if they think that tax cuts can solve the child care crisis in this country.

“Our monthly fees for infant care are \$880.00 a month,” says Sheila Davidson, Director of Child Care Services at Simon Fraser University. “Think about it - tax cuts are never going to make that affordable for many families who want and need our services.”

Our message to Mr. Martin is clear. Now is the time to spend a significant share of our budget surplus in a quality system of early childhood services that is available to all children, regardless of their families’ economic or employment status. Now is the time to act on 30 years of research that clearly demonstrates the social and economic benefits of a public investment in children’s early years.

For almost two decades, federal politicians have told Canadians that we can’t afford a child care program in Canada. Well now we can. If Mr. Martin and his government fail to act - all of their lofty words about the future of Canada’s children will be worthless indeed.

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