

Child Care

Advocacy

Forum

Focus on the Federal Election

Important Background Information

Our work in this federal election campaign needs to respond to 3 developments:

1. **First Ministers' Agreement on Early Childhood Development Services**

In September 2000, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial First Ministers reached an Agreement on Early Childhood Development Services. While this agreement represented a first step - it falls short in two significant ways:

First, the promised Federal contribution of \$2 billion over 5 years is **not enough to make a real difference**. Under the current agreement, only \$300 million will be transferred to provinces and territories in 2001/02. We know that this will not begin to address the need for affordable, quality child care.

Secondly, the agreement **does not make child care a cornerstone of early childhood development services**. While provincial and territorial government may choose to use the federal funds for child care, they are not required to do. And, there are no clear action plans with timelines and targets for the development of child care and related services. **So, the child care crisis continues.**

2. **The Federal Surplus**

There is now a considerable federal surplus. During this election, the debate will be about how we use the surplus. Many are putting forward tax cuts, as opposed to social investment, as the answer. **But, tax cuts are not a substitute for a comprehensive child care system!**

3. **B.C. Takes Leadership on Child Care**

The government of B.C. has made a commitment to develop and implement a comprehensive, publicly funded child care system, beginning with \$7 a day before and after school care in January, 2001. B.C. has also taken leadership at the federal/ provincial/territorial tables to move the early childhood development agenda forward. And, B.C. is the only province that has said it will use federal funds it under the Early Childhood Development Services Agreement for child care. These steps are to be applauded but we still need federal action. **We need all federal candidates to make a commitment that, if elected, they will work with our provincial government on B.C.'s child care initiative.**

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Federal Election Materials

Our goal in the Federal Election Campaign is to raise the profile of child care and to ensure that every newly elected MP is committed to advancing the child care agenda.

The Child Care Advocacy Forum and the Sign On For Canada's Kids Campaign are developing actions and tools that you can use. We are using the Sign On Campaign Website to share these ideas.

So, log onto **www.signonforcanadaskids.org** to find:

1. **Election Brochure** - An easy to use Brochure about child care in the Federal Election. It includes 3 questions to ask Candidates at public meetings. Last year we had an impact on the NDP leadership race because advocates raised child care at every leadership debate. Lets do it again.
2. **A Candidates' Commitment** - A statement for all candidates to sign, demonstrating their commitment to our 3 key messages. Make sure that every candidate in your riding signs and returns the Commitment.
3. **A Constituents' Letter** - A form letter for voters to send their federal candidates. Last year our strong letter writing campaign made a difference. Lets do it again. Ask everyone you know to send this letter to ALL of the candidates in their riding.
4. **Background Information** - A summary of each Party's position on child care and a Child Care Issue Sheet developed for the Women's World March last month.
5. **Links to Other Election Information and Campaigns** - Easy links to information about the election and related election advocacy campaigns.

Download, copy, distribute and use these election tools!

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What You Can Do In The Federal Election

Last year the child care community in B.C. showed that when we all speak up, we can make a difference. Lets do it again in the Federal Election.

Here's some things that you can do:

- Attend **All Candidate Meetings** in your riding and ask questions about child care. (See our Election Brochure for some questions to ask).
- Ask parents, coworkers, neighbours and others to **sign the Constituent's Letter** to Candidates. Make it easy for them by mailing the signed letters as a package. (Its is in this package and on the website - www.signonforcanadaskids.org)
- **Phone or visit your federal candidates** to ask where they stand on child care. Tell them you are pinning your vote on child care. Ask them to sign and return the Candidates Commitment. (It's on the website www.signonforcanadaskids.org)
- **Plan an event** during the week of Nov. 14 - 20 to raise the profile of child care in your riding. If you live in the Lower Mainland, attend the Forum's Candidates Meeting on: **Tuesday, November 14, 2000**
7:00 - 9:00 pm
Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House
2131 Renfrew Street, Vancouver (5th and Renfrew)
- **Write letters** to your local press, highlighting the importance of child care in the election.
- Participate in **radio call-in shows** about the election.
- Keep checking the website **www.signonforcanadaskids.org** for new developments and materials.

Remember, even if you have only 15 minutes to give - you can phone a candidate, sign and mail our Constituent's Letter or raise child care with a Candidate who comes to your door. Let them know you are pinning your vote on child care.

Together - we can make a difference!