



September 19, 2012

Roisin Fegan,
NGO Committee on the Rights of the Child.
Via email: fegan@childrightsnet.org.

Dear Members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child:

As you prepare to meet with representatives of the governments of Canada at the upcoming plenary session, the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C. appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this brief update on a key concern raised in your 2003 Concluding Observations: the right to access quality programs of early care and learning (or child care) that are affordable for families across Canada.

As we outlined in our 2011 written submission “A Tale of Two Canadas: Implementing Rights in Early Childhood” and highlighted in the presentation made by representatives of our organizations to your Committee in February of this year – Canada, one of the wealthiest developed economies in the world, is also one of the weakest when it comes to child care policy and funding. Outside of Quebec, child care in Canada is characterized by too few spaces, high parent fees and low wages paid to trained Early Childhood Educators.

Unfortunately, as our report analyzes in detail, Canada’s public reporting on child care is also weak. The failure of Canadian governments to acknowledge widespread concerns about child care quality and access in their third and fourth reports on the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (submitted November, 2009), among other public reports, makes it more difficult for Canadians to engage in meaningful dialogue and problem-solving.

Nonetheless, our organizations continue to raise awareness about the right to child care as outlined in a range of international agreements, including the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and in particular *General Comment No. 7: Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood*. When we met with you in February, we shared our [Declaration for a Child Care System in Canada](#). At that time, we had gathered endorsements from over 20 organizations. Today, we are pleased to advise you that our largely volunteer efforts have resulted in over 70 Canadian organizations – from coast to coast, large and small – signing on to the Declaration (see attached).

We close by thanking the Committee for your hard and important work. The scope of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* is broad and the needs of Canada’s vulnerable children, youth and families, in particular, are well-described in the compelling reports submitted to you by our colleagues. As you complete your deliberations, we encourage you to consider that Canada can afford to address these needs while simultaneously developing, funding and implementing a plan to advance universal rights in early childhood, such as child care. In fact, as a global leader, Canada should be held accountable for no less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Harney".

Susan Harney, Chairperson
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katie Arnup".

Katie Arnup, Board Member
Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada