

## FEDERAL ELECTION PAN-CANADIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

[Conservative Party](#)  
[Green Party of Canada](#)  
[Liberal Party of Canada](#)  
[New Democratic Party](#)

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### **Conservative Party**

#### Platform

Conservative finance critic Monte Solberg said the promises to fund a child care system are “an intrusion into provincial jurisdiction”. “If there is going to be help for parents, we can do that through the tax system, through lower taxes for families with children, as opposed to a national day-care program.”

Harper stated, “we’re going to seek low tax solutions rather than high spending solutions to public policy problems when they present themselves, for example, rather than boost spending on institutional day care we’ll offer tax break to families with children, regardless of how those children are raised.”

#### **"Demand Better Communities"**

“Canadians are more and more concerned about the future of their communities and the kind of society their children and grandchildren will grow up in. Will children and youth have access to high-quality education? What can be done to support families in need, and the strength of the family as a social institution?”

The Conservative party promises to:

- “improve relations with the provinces and clarify federal and provincial roles.
- cut taxes for individuals and families, get spending under control
- introduce a \$2,000 per child deduction\* to reduce the tax burden on families with children.”

\*This per child tax deduction is estimated to result in a \$320 to \$580 tax savings per child.

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### **Green Party of Canada**

#### Childcare and Early Learning

The Green Party is committed to developing a national childcare strategy — one that includes non-profit and professional daycare, increases support for at-home parents, enables childhood education and facilitates family health and basic child nutrition.

Early childhood development and education benefits all children and our society as a whole. Access to affordable, quality childhood education and care is essential to this development, especially for ages 0-6. Unfortunately access is severely limited because we lack a national system that acknowledges the educational, psychological, physical and nutritional needs of children and families.

Many women, especially single parents, are forced to spend more time away from their children working and/or studying. A well-planned national childcare system would benefit children by facilitating intellectual development and decreasing family stress.

In 1967, only 17% of mothers with a preschool child were in the labour force. By the turn of the century, the percentage was four times as high — nearly 70%. Currently in Canada, we spend about \$1 of public money on preschool education and care for every \$40 of spending on education at other age levels. The Green Party will create a National Childcare Network that shares resources and provides funding assistance to provincial initiatives.

The Green Party will:

- Ensure that all communities have access to family planning and early childhood services.
- Create tax-incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare.
- Provide educational multimedia resources for parents and children.
- Increase families' access to inexpensive, nutritious food.
- Enforce pay equity for women in the workplace.
- Promote a 32-hour work week.
- Provide additional student loan relief for low-income childcare professionals.
- Hold a referendum on creating a national public daycare program.

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## **Liberal Party of Canada**

### **Foundations: A National Early Learning and Child Care Program**

The time has come to do more. Over the next decade we must build for Canada's children and parents an early learning and child care system for the 21st century.

#### **A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL CREATE FOUNDATIONS: THE NATIONAL EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAM**

We will phase in a contribution of \$5 billion over the next five years, beyond funds already committed, to accelerate building the national system. The Foundations program will ensure that children have access to high-quality, government-regulated spaces at affordable cost to parents.

A Liberal government will enshrine in legislation four principles for Foundations - the "QUAD":

**QUALITY.** Each facility must be regulated by the province or territory to ensure safety and an appropriate complement of professionally-qualified child development staff.

**UNIVERSALITY.** The program will be open, without discrimination, to pre-school children, including children with special needs.

**ACCESSIBILITY.** The program will be affordable for parents.

**DEVELOPMENTAL.** The program must include a component of development / learning that is integrated with the care component.

Attempts to bring provincial programs to a high standard have been made before. The Liberal government sought in the early 1990s to put in place an early learning and child care program. Unfortunately it was not possible to reach agreement with the provinces at the time, in part because almost all governments were struggling to cope with unsustainable fiscal situations, but also due to the fact that there was no agreed-upon process to guide federal investment in the provinces' domain of social policy.

However, in early 1999, a Social Union Framework Agreement (SUFA) was reached on principles regarding the creation of joint initiatives. Already the Liberal government had worked successfully with the provinces and territories to develop the National Child Benefit in 1997. Since then, federal commitments to the NCB have increased to ensure more than \$10 billion annually by 2007. Meanwhile, in the area of early learning and child care, considerable progress has been made by provinces themselves and through co-operative efforts among the federal, provincial and territorial governments, notably the Early Childhood Development Agreement (2000), and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (2003). Federal contributions in these areas were accelerated in the last budget.

Existing commitments now total \$3.6 billion over five years, 2004-05 through 2008-09.

The implementation and details of the new Foundations program will be worked out collaboratively with provinces and territories consistent with the principles of the Social Union Framework Agreement. Provided provincial early learning and child care programs meet the QUAD principles, provinces will have flexibility to design a roll-out plan based on the most appropriate implementation to suit their circumstances.

To receive funding under the new Foundations program, provinces and territories will be invited to pass legislation implementing the QUAD principles. It is hoped that provinces will also contribute additional funds beyond those they are already spending on early learning and child care. Even if they do not, the federal government will provide a per capita share of funds to support existing provincial or territorial programs that embody the QUAD principles. But in this case the province's program would have fewer spaces or would develop more slowly than would be the case if the province contributed new funds.

Governing is about making choices - choices about how to devote finite resources so that they accomplish the most good for the people. A Liberal government will choose to invest in our children. Canada needs an early learning and child care system of high quality. Right now, we have a beginning, but we need to finish the job. A Liberal government will work with its provincial and territorial partners - just as we did with the National Child Benefit - to give Canada's children the start they need, the Foundation upon which their success, and ours as a nation, will be built.

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### **New Democratic Party**

NDP's eight key pledges to Canadians in this election campaign: "eight positive commitments to Canadians - eight practical ways to make life better for everyday people."

#5 -- "Make life more affordable and secure - starting with protecting pensions, removing GST from family essentials and expanding childcare."

EXCERPT:

[Building the Country We Want – Children and Families](#), page 11

“Working with provinces and territories and providing stable, long term federal funds to create and additional 200,000 high quality, publicly funded, affordable child care spaces within four years.”

[Issues: on child care and education](#)

**Platform 2004 costing – child care**

[Table 1.1](#) includes child care

Over 4 years, the NDP promises federal funds for "New child care spaces"

2005/06 --- \$1 billion in year 1

2006/07--- \$1.25 billion in year 2

2007/08 --- \$1.4 billion in year 3

2008/09 --- \$1.6 billion in year 4

Total = \$5.25 billion