

## FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

### Responses to the email sent to all BC candidates from the NDP, Liberal, Conservative and Green parties (alphabetical by candidate's last name)

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[Roger Benham](#) [Green Party candidate: Skeena]  
[Hilary Crowley](#) [Green Party candidate: Prince George-Peace River]  
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#### **Roger Benham** **Green Party Candidate** **Skeena**

Extract from Green Party Platform:

10 - Childcare and Early Learning - A Foundation for Our Future

Parents are doing their best to give their children opportunities to be successful, happy and healthy. The Green Party is committed to developing a national childcare strategy - one that includes non-profit and professional daycare, increased support for at-home parents and greater focus on family education, health and basic nutrition.

The Green Party will:

- Raise the benefit levels for parental leave under the Employment Insurance Act.
- Create tax-incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare.
- Create a national network that links childcare services across all three levels of government and funds local childcare initiatives and facilities.
- Enforce pay equity for women in the work place.

Currently in Canada, we spend about one dollar of public money on preschool education and care for every forty dollars we spend on education at other age levels. We need to change our thinking to consider the long-term - there's simply no better investment.

Fact: In 1967, only 17% of mothers with a preschool child were in the labour force. By the year 2000, the percentage was four times as high - nearly 70%.

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#### **Hilary Crowley** **Green Party candidate**

## **Prince George-Peace River**

1. As a Green Party MP, I will raise benefit levels for parental leave under the EI act and create tax incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site child care. We will ensure that all communities have access to non-profit family planning and day care. We would fund programs for early childhood education. We will also hold a referendum on creating a national public daycare program and, dependent on level of support, implement the same.

2. The Green Party will create a national network that links child care services across all three levels of Government and funds local child care initiatives and facilities. This will ensure that tax dollars enhance child care.

The Green Party is dedicated to supporting low income families and their children and to eliminate child poverty. Thank you for the opportunity to address these important concerns.

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## **Carmen Gustafson Green Party candidate Kootenay-Columbia**

1. The Green Party has always had a policy regarding child care (not just at election time). I personally will advocate for a universal child care program. Last September I had the chance to live in Finland, a country with a very strong universal child care system. It was impressive that my friendship family did not have to worry about having a place for their son, or it being safe. He went to preschool just down the street at the elementary school. There is no doubt in my mind that this system provides benefits to society that far outweigh the costs. It also allows women to have more choices in employment and may help families improve their standard of living. The Green Party would like to see a referendum on a national day-care system, more support for families and pay equity for women.

I think one thing that we are overlooking is a child care strategy for Aboriginal children that is sensitive to their particular community needs. I would also advocate for a unique universal child care system within reserves and Metis settlements that is created by First Nations mothers and families.

2. Grass roots organizing and democracy are key values to the Green Party. I believe that working directly with service providers and families is the best way to ensure that programs are working. When we see that the Provinces are not upholding their part of the agreement, we need to respond. If elected, I would work to ensure that standards in funding and service levels are met throughout the country. If the provinces do not have the fiscal management capacity to do this, perhaps it may be time to give some of the responsibility to municipalities to manage child care services. Federal funding should not replace provincial funding, and this is something that I and a Green Party government would not tolerate!

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## **Judy Higginbotham Liberal Candidate Cloverdale**

1. The Liberal government will contribute \$5 billion over the next five years, beyond funds already committed, to accelerate the building of a Canada-wide

system of early learning and child-care. The Foundations program will ensure that children have access to high-quality, government-regulated spaces at affordable costs to parents.

2. The Liberal government will enshrine in legislation the four principles for Foundations - the "QUAD": quality, universality, accessibility and development. Federal funding will be provided to provinces that put in place early learning and child care programs based on the QUAD principles. It is hoped that provinces and territories 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 new and existing provincial or territorial programs that embody the QUAD principles.

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**Ariel Lade**  
**Green Party Candidate**  
**Victoria**

1. The Green Party of Canada starts by asking what the long-term consequences are for children whose parents don't have enough time to spend with them because they are working. Consequently, we would raise the benefit levels for parental leave under the EI provisions, increase support for at-home parents, create incentives for businesses to introduce flexible work hours and on-site childcare and enforce pay equity for women in the workplace.

We are also committed to developing a nation-wide childcare strategy that includes professional, non-profit daycare. We envision a (near) future where women and men are equally involved in all segments of society. Clearly, a comprehensive national daycare program is a must to realize this goal. There are existing models (Quebec, northern European countries) that can be usefully studied and implemented.

2. Clearly, a new understanding has to be reached between the federal government and the provinces. Currently, there is little control over how provincial governments spend transfer payments. Accountability measures are, indeed, weak, and this is one of the reasons that Roy Romanow advocated in his review of the health care system that accountability be added as one of the guiding principles of health care. This has resonated with Canadians, who overwhelmingly support the principle of accountability, to the dismay, unfortunately, of the provincial governments, who see this as an invasion of their area of jurisdiction. Perhaps Canadians will need to demand accountability regarding disbursement of all transfer payments.

As the Green Party believes in community-based decision making, it would encourage more involvement of municipal governments in providing services (including daycare) to constituents. The Green Party will pay close attention to the debate on comprehensive national daycare and raise its voice to defend the needs of working parents. We can no longer wait for such a service, promised by the Liberals since 1993.

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**Lloyd MaciLquham**  
**Liberal Candidate**  
**Nanaimo-Cowichan**

[in reference to the Liberals' recently announced child care policy]  
Questions have come up in recent debates in our riding re other lesser

comprehensive plans (did not have educational component and did not require legislation passed by provincial government to sign onto the program in order to take full advantage of it, as this one does) that were announced in the past ie 1993 that were not implemented. Unfortunately in 1993 The Liberals inherited a 40 BILLION dollar annual deficit from Brian Mulrooney and our nation deficit had been ballooning since the early 70's when all of the major countries in the world decided that deficit spending was the way to go. This proved to be untrue and the national and current year deficits had to be dealt with or we would be in very severe trouble right now. Since the Liberals have had balanced budgets and the National Deficit has now been paid down we are in a real position to implement this child care program and many others.

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**Patrick Meyer**  
**Green Party Candidate**  
**Langley**

Please find below the section of the party platform which specifically deals with child care.

In addition I would like to add some personal notes.

As a father with a young daughter in daycare I understand the challenge parents face when looking for not only safe but mentally and physically stimulating child care.

When parents are unable to find affordable safe environments for their children they cannot, in tern, contribute to society in the manner they could if childcare was available to them. Speaking merely of economic matters, if parents re-enter the workforce they earn wages and become taxpaying citizens. These taxes more than offset the costs incurred by the childcare that would be supplied for their child(ren). It seems simply obvious that we help people who want to re-enter the workforce by supplying them with subsidized daycare even if we were to only look at the monetary reasons alone.

But this doesn't answer your question completely. There is still the issue of safety. We must implement a national strategy, not unlike our medical system which is the envy of the world. A system which would be professional and regulated, and would be nation-wide. A system that would grow and contract base don the needs of the region.

And like how our medical system used to be (and must become again) the national childcare system must be federally funded with the proviso that the funds be matched by the provinces (in whatever ratio that is deemed appropriate). Federal funding must have strings so that provincial funds aren't simply diverted into other projects. 'Accountability measures' must be firmed up.

Proper child care is an investment into our collective future. When we gamble with each other's children we gamble with our own future.

**Childcare and Early Learning - A Foundation for Our Future**

Parents are doing their best to give their children opportunities to be successful, happy and healthy. The Green Party is committed to developing a national childcare strategy - one that includes non-profit and professional daycare, increased support for at-home parents and greater focus on family education, health and basic nutrition.

The Green Party will:

- Raise the benefit levels for parental leave under the Employment Insurance Act.
- Create tax-incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare.
- Create a national network that links childcare services across all three levels of government and funds local childcare initiatives and facilities.
- Enforce pay equity for women in the work place.

Currently in Canada, we spend about one dollar of public money on preschool education and care for every forty dollars we spend on education at other age levels. We need to change our thinking to consider the long-term - there's simply no better investment.

Fact: In 1967, only 17% of mothers with a preschool child were in the labour force. By the year 2000, the percentage was four times as high - nearly 70%.

**Vern Nielsen**  
**Liberal Candidate**  
**Kelowna**

1. The Liberal government will contribute \$5 billion over the next five years, beyond funds already committed, to accelerate the building of a Canada-wide system of early learning and child-care. The Foundations program will ensure that children have access to high-quality, government-regulated spaces at affordable costs to parents.

2. The Liberal government will enshrine in legislation the four principles for Foundations - the "QUAD": quality, universality, accessibility and development. Federal funding will be provided to provinces that put in place early learning and child care programs based on the QUAD principles. It is hoped that provinces and territories 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 new and existing provincial or territorial programs that embody the QUAD principles.

**Kwangyul Peck**  
**Liberal Candidate**  
**Port Moody - Westwood - Port Coquitlam**

As a Federal candidate, I understand that the system of child care support is essential to young, growing children.

That is why the Liberal Party has created foundations to strengthen early childhood development through the National Early Learning and Child Care Program. We will phase in approximately \$5 billion over the next five years, beyond already committed dollars. This will accelerate the construction of the national system. Access to high-quality, government-regulated spaces at affordable cost to parents will be made certain under the Foundations program.

A Liberal government will enshrine four principles for the Foundations in legislation, known as "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.

Further, the Federal Liberal Party has committed over \$10 billion annually to the National Child Benefit by 2007. As regards to your emphasis on early learning and child care, significant progress has been made through co-operative efforts such as the Early Childhood Development Agreement (signed 2000) and the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (signed 2003). Federal contributions to these areas were accelerated in the last budget and now current commitments total \$3.6 billion over five years, 2004-05 through 2008-09.

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**Nicholas Simons**  
**NDP Candidate**  
**West Vancouver - Sunshine Coast**

I was the Director of Health and Social Services for a First Nations band here in B.C., and prior to that a Child Protection Social Worker. I am pleased and honoured by the response I received by clients during my career (so far) which recognized my commitment to alleviating the financial strains placed on families in mid- and lower-income brackets. I am committed to working towards universal daycare. I would not be associated with a political party that did not place the concerns of families and children near the top of its agenda.

1. Families must be provided with an opportunity to afford accessible daycare (through subsidies or other innovative programs).
2. Any federal funds destined for day care subsidy will be used for that purpose. I would not sanction any Provincial misuse of daycare funding. Please look at the [ndp.ca](http://ndp.ca) website for details on how the NDP tries to keep important issues on the national agenda.

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**Jane Sterk**  
**Green Party Candidate**  
**Esquimalt - Juan de Fuca**

1. The Green Party of Canada (GPC) would approach child care inadequacies from two sides. First, and directly related to daycare itself, we would create tax incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare; and, we would hold a referendum on creating a national, public daycare program. Second, on the ability to fund side, we would raise the benefit levels for parental leave under Employment Insurance; and, we would enforce pay equity for women in the workplace.

2. We would make sure that federal funding for social programs is adequate - i.e. a high enough percentage of budgets that provinces must comply with federal regulations and directives for where the money is to be spent; that the monies be spent on the programs for which they are intended; that the monies cannot be used by provinces to reduce their contribution toward the program; and, that the money will not flow into "general" revenues of the provincial governments or into some overly general category as was done with the shift in the 1990s when the federal government lumped health and social dollars

together. We would unclump the money and target funds to the specific benefit and measure the effectiveness. We believe that supporting families with young children is a priority and that support should translate into educational dollars for the under 6 age group and into increasing the amount of time parents have to enjoy and nurture their families.

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**Peggy Stortz**  
**Green Party Candidate**  
**North Vancouver**

1. The Green Party is committed to developing a national child-care strategy which includes an increase in benefits for parental leave and incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare facilities.
2. The Green Party will create a national network linking childcare services across all three levels of government to ensure the funding of local child-care initiatives and facilities.