



FEDERAL ELECTION :: JANUARY 23, 2006

**DEFEND DAYCARE!**

## THE POLITICAL PARTY PLATFORMS ON CHILD CARE PART A – WHAT ARE THEY SAYING ABOUT CHILD CARE?

[Conservative Party](#)

[Green Party](#)

[Liberal Party](#)

[New Democratic Party](#)

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### Conservative party of Canada

#### ***A child care allowance***

“Choice in child care: We will support parents whether they choose formal day care, a babysitter, neighbourhood child care, or having one parent stay at home.

The Conservative Party plan provides \$10.9 billion over five years . That is \$1,200 per year to parents for each child under six and \$1,250,000,000 in employers’ tax credits for 125,000 new workspace daycare spaces.”

#### **A \$1,200 Choice in Child Care Allowance for pre-school children**

05 December 2005

*And capital assistance for building new childcare spaces*

OTTAWA – Conservative leader Stephen Harper today announced that a Conservative government will introduce a new \$1,200 per year Choice in Child Care Allowance for children under six, and a \$250 million Community Childcare Investment Program for capital assistance for new childcare spaces. The Choice in Child Care Allowance will apply to an estimated 2 million children of pre-school age.

“The Liberal plan sends money to provincial governments. The total cost of our plan will be \$10.9 billion over five years, which is \$4.7 billion more than the Liberals are planning,” said Harper. “Our plan provides money directly to parents. You can spend that money the way you see fit. You can choose the child care option that best suits your family’s needs.”

The plan will help parents to choose the decision that best suits their families – whether it means formal child care, informal care through neighbours or relatives, or a parent staying at home.

The new Conservative plan has two components. First a Choice in Childcare Allowance will provide \$1,200 per year for each pre-school child. Second, an annual \$250 million Community Childcare Investment Program will provide capital assistance to help employers and communities create childcare spaces in the workplace, or through cooperative or community associations.

The new Choice in Child Care Allowance will be in addition to the current Canada Child Tax Benefit, National Child Benefit Supplement and the Child Care

Expenses Deduction. The Conservatives will honour the government's existing one-year bilateral commitments to provinces for institutional childcare. The new Choice in Child Care Allowance will not be clawed back from middle-income families. Instead, it will be taxed in the hands of the lower-income spouse.

In addition, the Conservatives will initiate a Community Childcare Investment Program will help employers and communities create child care spaces in the workplace or through cooperative or community associations by establishing a tax credit that will create an estimated 125,000 new child care spaces over five years.

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## **Green Party of Canada**

### Child and Family Well-Being

EXCERPT -- Green Party MPs will work to:

- Create a "Comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy for Canada," which will:
  - Toughen regulations to ensure fair treatment and better wage standards for all working Canadians.
  - Raise benefit levels and increase eligibility under the Employment Insurance Act.
  - Remove GST on education supplies and specific family products.
  - Expand child tax credits and benefits.
- Support provinces that adopt a basic income strategy to ensure the benefits of a living wage are available to every citizen through existing federal programs.
- Create tax incentives for businesses to implement flexible schedules and on-site childcare.
- Boost funding for early childhood education and work with other governments to link local childcare and education centres into a national network.

### Green Party launches election platform

As part of its fight against poverty, Green Party MPs would push to create new funding networks for locally-run housing, child care and health programs and reorient the CMHC to provide greater support to non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives.

If voted into government, the Green Party would:

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

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## **Liberal Party of Canada**

### **"Affordable Childcare for All Canadian Families**

The Liberal government recognizes that parents play the primary role in raising their children. We are keenly aware, however, that Canadian families need our support as they juggle work and family.

That is why the Liberal government believes the time has come to develop a national early learning and child care initiative in Canada.

Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services are working towards a shared vision for such an initiative. \$5 billion over five years has been earmarked to help fund this effort. We are laying the groundwork for a nation-wide system that embraces the shared principles of quality care, universal inclusiveness, accessibility and an emphasis on development and learning. Our partners also agree that a formal plan must include measurable goals, strong accountability and provincial/territorial flexibility so that the needs of all families can be met.”

### **“Real Childcare Choices**

In October 2005, Québec became the first province to have signed a full agreement that will support the development of quality early learning and child care for families. Early learning and childcare agreements in principle have also been signed with Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Alberta and British Columbia. As a sign of good will, a trust fund is now accessible to the remaining provinces and territories, so that all Canadians can start to see the benefits of improved early learning and child care choices.

In addition to new funds for early learning and child care, the Liberal government invests more than \$13 billion each year in services for children and families. A new Liberal government will remain firmly committed to ensuring that families are able to make the choices that work for them.”

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## **New Democratic Party**

### **Putting Children First**

#### **The NDP plan to improve child care and fight child poverty has three main elements:**

- *A Child Care Act* to ensure that federal funding for child care is targeted at licensed, high-quality, non-profit child care.
- \$1.8 billion invested in child care next year, with annual increases of \$250 million for the next three years. This would create 200,000 additional spaces in the first year, with another 25,000 spaces annually after that.
- An increase in the federal child tax credit of \$1,000 phased in over four years in order to help lower-income families cover child care costs and meet other essential expenses.

Layton said the NDP plan means a permanent commitment to create high-quality, licensed, non-profit child care, one affordable step at a time.

“Liberals promised a national child care program when they were elected 12 years ago. Meanwhile, toddlers became teenagers,” Layton said. “Child care delayed is child care denied.”

### **Commitments For Children**

DECEMBER 12, 2005 – The NDP spelled out three key commitments to children.

#### ***A Child Care Act***

We will introduce a *Child Care Act* that spells out that federal funding for child

care is for licensed, high-quality, non-profit child care. We'll monitor that Act, and we'll enforce it.

**A permanent federal commitment to national child care**

We will commit \$1.8 billion a year to child care in the first year, and then increase this sum by \$250 million a year over the following three years. At an average of \$9,000 per space, this commitment means we will be providing 200,000 spaces, with an additional 25,000 new spaces in each of the next three years.

- Licensed care
- High-quality care.
- Non-profit care.
- A permanent commitment.

**A significant increase in the federal child tax credit.**

This credit will be increased in steps over four years – increasing by \$250 a year until it reaches an extra \$1,000. This measure will help lower-income families cover their share of child care costs.

**Cost of these commitments:**

**1. Transfers to provinces for child care (in millions of dollars)**

06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
\$1,800	\$2,050	\$2,300	\$2,550

**2. Child Tax Credit Benefit**

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Individuals (per child)	\$250	\$500	\$750	\$1,000
Total expenditure (in millions)	\$1,000	\$2,400	\$3,700	\$5,100

**Differences between Child Care Programs**

**How does today’s NDP announcement on child care compare to the Liberal/Conservative plans?**

**Are there child care standards?**

**Liberals:** No. The Liberals are writing no-strings attached cheques to the provinces.

**Conservatives:** No. The Conservatives are simply converting child care funding into a tax credit.

**NDP:** Yes. Child Care Act specifies that federal funds are only available for licensed, non-profit child care. All child care dollars go to child care – not to dividends.

**What is being committed to child care?**

**Liberals:** \$1.6 billion a year.

**Conservatives:** A taxable benefit of \$1,200 for each child under the age of six. Net cost depends on how much is taxed back each year.

**NDP:** \$1.6 billion in 2005, \$1.8 billion in 2006, \$2.05 billion in 2007, \$2.3 billion in 2008 and \$2.55 billion in 2009.

**How many spaces are created?**

Assuming that, on average, it costs \$9,000 to create and fund a child care space:

**Liberals:** Fund 178,000 spaces a year (\$1.6 billion a year committed), which never increases.

**Conservatives:** Not clear any spaces would be created.

**NDP:** Fund 200,000 spaces in 2006, then increase by 25,000 each year. By 2009-2010, some 275,000 spaces are created.

#### **What are the parties proposing to do to address child poverty?**

**Liberals:** Nothing.

**Conservatives:** Nothing.

**NDP:** Proposes a step-by-step increase in the child tax credit, raising it by \$250 a year over four years.

#### **NDP Wants Big Box Companies Banned From National Child Care Plan**

Fri 30 Sep 2005

OTTAWA – The Liberal government risks ruining any hope of a high-quality national child care plan by insisting on funding "big box" child care corporations, NDP social policy critic Tony Martin said today.

"These companies' bottom line is profit, not our kids, not our parents nor families," Martin said at a press conference for Lynne Wannan, an Australian expert in child care services, who is beginning a national tour.

"Have we as Canadians not learned from our problems in softwood lumber or beef when foreign interests sabotage what is best for Canada?"

Martin urged the government to cut the big-box corporations, "foreign or Canadian", out of any of the \$5 billion first installment in the national early learning and child care funding now rolling out through separate agreements with provinces. So far, seven provinces have signed deals with Ottawa.

"The research and several reports document at least a 10 per cent difference in quality in favour of the 'not for profit' sector. That difference will only get worse with the hundreds of thousands of kids and billions of dollars this plan will affect," he said.

Martin said a minimal first step in banning corporations from Canadian child care is to cap the number of children or centres any company could manage.

Martin equated the potential of a genuinely national early learning and child care system to the impact medicare has had on the country. Canada needs the full participation of its skilled workforce to successfully compete in the global economy.

"Neither the Liberal nor Conservative plan for child care will give us what Canada needs to compete," Martin said. "Giving money to "for profit" corporations, all these piecemeal separate agreements with the provinces – and the Conservative idea of giving a few hundred dollars to parents will never build a quality, affordable, accessible regulated system."

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**The remaining [registered political parties](#)** – listing and links to sites.

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