

KEY POINTS

Access to quality, affordable early care and learning services advances women's equality, helping women to both parent and work, study, or volunteer in their communities. To Canada's shame, such care is hard to find.

- 72% of women with children under six are in the paid workforce.
- Overall, 2 in 3 young children with employed or studying mothers are in some form of child care.
- Too many of these are in unregulated care with non-relatives, the quality of which is unknown.
- There are not nearly enough regulated spaces.
- Child care is generally the second highest cost for families and frequently exceeds the cost of post-secondary education. For many families, this cost is unbearable.

Lack of access to quality, affordable early care and learning is a primary reason why mothers with young children experience the highest levels of work-life stress in Canada.

CANADA'S OBLIGATIONS

Federal, provincial and territorial governments in Canada have made commitments to honour women's right to access quality, affordable early care and learning through various agreements. All agreements recognize that parents have primary responsibility for their children and that the government's role is to ensure that families have the support necessary to carry out their responsibilities.

For example, under the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1981), Canada and other signing countries agreed to ensure that mothers are supported to participate fully in society, including in the workforce, and that women are remunerated fairly for their work.

WHAT THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS ABOUT CANADA

The UN has expressed significant concerns about Canada's lack of progress toward realizing women's right to child care. CEDAW's most recent review in 2008:

- urged Canada to improve efforts to provide a sufficient number of affordable child care spaces with attention to particularly disadvantaged groups, such as aboriginal communities and low-income women.
- recommended a cost-benefit analysis of the current state of living standards, housing, and child care in Canada and how these are impacting the economic empowerment of women.



72% of women with children under six are in the paid workforce



There are only enough regulated spaces for 20% of young children in Canada



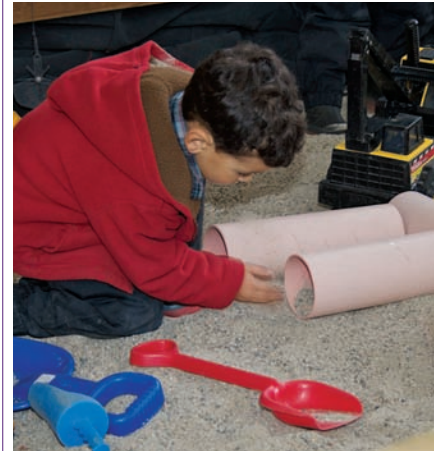
In general, the United Nations was so concerned about the lack of progress towards women's rights that they took the extraordinary step of asking Canada to report back within one year on key areas of concern. Canada did not provide this report.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

More than three quarters of Canadians believe that the lack of affordable child care is a serious issue. While Canadian governments have made promises and signed commitments, they have not delivered a universally accessible, quality, affordable early care and learning system which would advance the rights of women.

CALL TO ACTION

1. **Raise your voice** – talk to those around you about the denial of women's rights in Canada. Talk to your employer, your union, your neighbours, your friends, and more.
Then go to www.weneedchildcare.ca and tell your story.
2. **Stand up with child care advocates** around the country – join the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC or your provincial child care advocacy organization today. Together we can create change.
3. **Vote** – keep child care on the political agenda in all federal, provincial and municipal elections.
4. **Read and endorse our UN Brief, *A Tale of Two Canadas: Implementing Rights in Early Childhood***, found at: www.cccabc.bc.ca/res/rights.html



More than half of single mothers with children under six live in poverty



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IS A



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