

Will the child care promises become a reality?

CCCABC Response to the Federal Throne Speech
October 2004

Child care was an important item on the federal election agenda. The federal Liberal party put forward their child care platform as a priority - they promised to enshrine four key child care principles in legislation Quality, Universality, Accessibility, and Developmental programming. The New Democratic Party responded with significant child care commitments, and, in the English Leader's Debate, Mr. Martin (Liberal), Layton (NDP) and Duceppe (Bloc Quebecois - BQ) all lauded the Quebec child care system as the 'way to go'.

While today's throne speech includes few details of how the federal Liberals are proposing to move forward and no mention of legislation, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC) remains steadfast in its expectations we look to the Liberal minority government to co-operate with all parties and MP's who recognize the importance of keeping the child care promises to ensure the promises become a reality!

The CCCABC Board of Directors is pleased to have met with Tony Martin MP, NDP Social Policy Critic, while he undertook his pan-Canadian 'Child Care Fact Finding Tour'. We discussed the importance of a legislative framework based on principles; working towards a system of public and not-for-profit delivery of child care; and significant funding - \$5 billion at first and working towards an increase in funding commitment to equal one per cent of the GDP.

CCCABC will continue to work with all elected parties who support the following important commitments to Canada's children and families:

- legislation enshrining the principles of quality, universality, inclusion, accessibility, and developmental programming;
- funding that will support implementation of significant changes in order to move Canada from a user fee and subsidy patchwork to a pan-Canadian child care system funded through our taxes;
- recognition of the distinct status of Quebec and their access to federal funding to advance their publicly funded child care system;
- stronger accountability measures that require provinces/territories receiving federal child care funds to develop their child care systems based on compliance with principles, standards and timelines; and
- sufficient federal funding to establish a solid foundation in the short term and to ensure stable and adequate funding in the long term.

Susan Harney, Coalition Chairperson said, "given the BC Liberal track record in cutting provincial child care funding and in using the federal dollars for 'anything but child care', we need to ensure that federal funds are used to build a high quality, universally accessible, inclusive child care system. We need to ensure that all federal child care money is used to supplement, rather than replace, provincial child care funding".

Our children can't wait any longer!