

## ***Child Care, Early Learning & Women's Equality***

What can we say about the critical importance of a universal, publicly-funded, accessible, affordable and flexible child care & early learning program that hasn't been said before?

Women must be able to access child care in order to achieve full equality and economic security.

Canadian society must share the responsibility and costs of raising families. The federal, provincial, and territorial governments must work together to create a program which meets the needs of all parents and their families. Prior to the last federal election, we were closer to realizing this vision. However, our vision is not shared by the current federal government.

Soon after achieving a Conservative minority government, Prime Minister Harper reneged on a groundbreaking child care and early learning agreement with the provinces and territories. Instead, he created a new system: monthly payments of \$100 to parents with children under 6 years of age. We call it the "babysitting allowance." This taxable benefit certainly doesn't cover the cost of child care or create child care spaces. To add insult to injury, it's taxed at a rate that hurts low and middle income families while rewarding high income, one-earner families.

Many groups across the country are lobbying hard for a national child care program. Two of the national leaders in the field are the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and Code Blue.

The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada is dedicated to promoting quality, publicly-funded child care which is accessible to all. It is a membership-based, non-profit organization with regional representatives. For more information and valuable resources, visit their website at: [www.buildchildcare.ca](http://www.buildchildcare.ca)

Code Blue is a national campaign to build a real pan-Canadian child care system. Their campaign brings together national, provincial and territorial child care organizations, labour, women's and social justice groups along with Canadians from all walks of life in the lobby – all sharing a commitment to ensuring everyone has full access to child care. Their website is invaluable in the fight for a real child care program: [www.buildchildcare.ca](http://www.buildchildcare.ca)

Our collective lobby will continue until the vision becomes reality.