

FOR  
UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE  
PUBLICLY FUNDED  
NON-COMPULSORY  
DAY CARE  
IN CANADA.

ACTION DAY CARE

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## INTRODUCTION

Action Day Care recently produced a position paper on a universally-accessible, publicly-funded, non-compulsory day care system in Canada. The paper was intended as a discussion paper in preparation for the Second Canadian Conference on Day Care to be held in Winnipeg, September 23-25, 1982. The paper was circulated to about 300 people across the country. This paper represents the revised version after further discussion in Action Day Care and the receipt of feedback from day care activists across the country.

The statistics cited are slightly out-of-date, most being from 1980. We are now in receipt of up-dated figures, but frankly, the picture presented here does not change much. We hope that this paper will continue to serve as a discussion-piece for many day care groups and that we will continue to hear from you with your interest and concerns.

## SUMMARY (Courtesy of the B.C. Day Care Coalition)

The position is divided into 4 major sections:

- What Kind of Day Care Do We Want?
- What Kind of Day Care Do We Have Now In Canada?
- How Do We Get High Quality, Universally-Accessible Day Care?
- Strategies for Action: How to Win?

### 1. What Kind of Day Care Do We Want?

The paper identifies 4 interlocking needs:

- children need good day care
- women need good day care
- parents need good day care
- society needs good day care

To meet these interlocking needs, the day care system in Canada must have the following characteristics:

- widely available - in rural, urban and suburban locations in every province, wide variety of types to be available;
- financially accessible to all - this inevitably means large government subsidies.
- universally of high quality - good facilities, programming, sanitation, low staff-child ratios and trained staff. Minimum standards.

## 2. What Kind of Day Care Do We Have Now in Canada?

The 3 characteristics identified in the first section are examined on a national level. A broad overview is provided by presenting statistics from all provinces. This is, by necessity, quite general.

Availability: Present licensed spaces serve only 3% of children aged 0-9 and only 8% of children in need of care because their mothers are in the workforce.

- Presently available spaces: 80% for 2-5 year olds, 8% for infants, and 15% for school-age children.
- Areas highlighted for concern: needs of school-age children; hours and days of operation; integration of handicapped children, wide variations existing in quantity, quality, location, government standards, working conditions, etc. various forms of sponsorship (commercial, family day care, community boards, parent co-op, public, etc.)

Financial Accessibility: "Good day care is already financially accessible only to the fairly affluent and to those poor enough to qualify for a big subsidy. This situation is getting worse, rather than better". (p. 8)

- The problem with government funding is related to the inadequacies of the basic funding mechanisms (CAP and child care tax deduction).
- The federal government, through CAP shares the cost of day care services despite its being under provincial jurisdiction. The federal government cost-shares 50% of provincial expenditures for day care for those families considered to be "in need" or "likely to be in need". This program is for welfare or low-income families who need subsidy to go to work or school. This has meant that day care has remained a welfare, custodial service.
- This federal cost-sharing applies only to the costs of individual families (i.e. fees), it does not apply to operating costs such as start-up, capital costs, maintenance grants, etc. These costs are left to provincial initiative.
- Maintenance grants (per diem fee paid by government directly to a centre) have been initiated in Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec and New Brunswick; in addition Saskatchewan centres get a small equipment grant.
- Some funds are made available to parents through the Income Tax Act.

Quality of Care - This discussion includes a look at working conditions and salaries of day care staff (national average - \$800-850 a month). The need for improved working conditions to reduce staff turnover is identified as an important aspect or providing quality.

- Inconsistency and lack of enforcement of regulations are highlighted.
- The fact that 90% of all children in the 0-9 age group are in informal arrangements - quality may be good or bad. The study carried out by Laura Johnson states that most of this informal care is only "adequate custodial-type care."

### 3. How Do We Get High Quality, Universally-Accessible Day Care?

The paper examines three national strategies that are emerging in the national day care movement.

#### 1. Amend the Income Tax Act to give larger child care expense deductions

- Tax deductions are shown to be of most benefit to higher earning women, while those on minimum wage or low-income do not benefit much from tax deductions.
- Tax deductions now discriminate against men, only allowing single fathers with custody papers to use the grant, while any mother can.
- Private babysitters do not want to claim income, so receipts are difficult to get.
- Tax Credit, as opposed to tax deductions, would solve some of the problems of discrimination in favour of high income earners, but would still be a form of public spending without public accountability, and would still not contribute a lot towards parents' fees.
- Tax deduction and tax credit lead day care in an adverse direction: towards the growth of commercial centres and away from a publicly-funded system.

#### 2. Establish a publicly funded, not-for-profit day care system incorporating a variety of services in neighbourhood resource centres.

- This option is supported and elaborated by Action Day Care.
- "The day care movement's best strategy is to fight for complete public funding of not-for-profit programs".
- There are two key elements to this proposal:
  - (a) a new National Child Care Act; and
  - (b) the Neighbourhood Resource Centre as a model of service delivery.
- National Child Care Act: The federal government should remove day care from CAP and establish a new system under which the federal government would pay 50% of all operating, capital and other costs in each province, contingent upon:

(i) child care facilities meeting national standards of quality (minimum standards);

(ii) child care being universally available.

The initiative for establishing centres and programs would still come from a variety of places, ensuring a variety of services to meet particular needs. Each province would decide under what jurisdiction day care would be administered, e.g. education, social services, human resources, etc.

- In areas of large enough population, government should encourage the development of Neighbourhood Resource Centres which aim to provide a comprehensive approach to day care which would broaden and enrich the program possibilities and would co-ordinate present programs which are scattered and isolated.
- The advantages of such a system would be children's changing needs can be accommodated without disruptive relocation; parent involvement at the local level can be maximized; cost-efficiency would be achieved by centralization of presently duplicated tasks; planned day care system would lend prestige to the service, the standard of care would be easier to monitor; and the development of each child could be recorded and consistent support developed.
- The major disadvantage is the cost. Estimated cost is \$3.5 billion a year. This represents only 1% of the Canadian GNP, but governments will not be open to it at this time. Still reflects the correct perspective.

### 3. Reform Canada Assistance Plan

- This proposal is advocated by those who think the call for publicly-funded universally-accessible care is unattainable. It is not supported by Action Day Care.
- These defending this position argue for changes in the framework of CAP to define all children as "likely to be in need".
- It suggests make some changes to current eligibility criteria and extending maintenance, capital and start-up grants to all children, not just those who are subsidized.
- This proposal is rejected because it tries to reform CAP to be something it was not intended to be. CAP was not set up to establish a federal day care system, rather to help individual low-income Canadians.

**CONCLUSION:** With the current funding mechanisms and conservative government attitudes in all provinces, our day care system will continue to deteriorate. We urge all day care activists across the country to examine carefully the proposals in this paper and to move forward at the time of this important national day care conference.

### Strategies for Action:

- The government has not shown a readiness to commit itself to a greatly expanded day care system supported by public funds.
- A strong national campaign is needed to affect governments.
- The strategy is based on long-term goals of universally-accessible, publicly-funded, non-compulsory day care. Our campaign must include those broad-sweeping goals and work to educate politicians and the public about this need.
- At the same time, we should organize a campaign based on immediately realizable aims which will win immediate improvements and lead us in the ultimate direction.
- The demands of such a campaign would be:
  - (a) For a federal government supplement of \$5 per day per child space to not-for-profit day care programs;
  - (b) For a matching provincial government supplement of \$5 per day ....
  - (c) For a Parliamentary Standing Committee to make recommendations on a new National Child Care Act which would create universally-accessible, publicly-funded, non-compulsory day care in Canada.
- To implement such a strategy we need a national organizing committee which will be represented by all provinces, publish a regular newsletter to keep day care activists informed and organize a series of events leading up to the next federal election.

We must have a plan - a vision - of what Canada's future day care system should look like. This will allow us to work together effectively to hasten its arrival. This paper presents a vision of the future, contrasts that with our present situation and proposes some ways of working together to achieve our common goals.

#### WHAT KIND OF DAY CARE DO WE WANT?

Good day care meets a number of interlocking needs.

Children need good day care - During the International Year of the Child, the idea of children's rights was codified - their right to love and understanding, to freedom from neglect and cruelty, their right to stimulating, caring environments where they can learn and play with other children. A broad spectrum of full and part-time quality day care can help fulfill these rights.

Women Need Good Day Care - Mothers have traditionally been the primary caregivers for young children. More and more of these mothers want to and need to join the workforce for part or all of the day. Women cannot have equal opportunities for jobs and advancement in the labour force unless day care is widely available; they cannot work with good conscience unless the care available is of high quality, and there are opportunities for parent input and parent choice.

Parents Need Good Day Care - Parents need support for their child rearing responsibilities too. As men begin to play a much more significant role in caring for their children, fathers appreciate the benefits of good day care as well.

Society Needs Good Day Care - Early childhood education is crucial to the formation of young minds, attitudes and habits. In a period of social service cutbacks, high unemployment, falling real incomes and general economic uncertainty, young children are likely to suffer more than others. Expenditures on children's needs, it may appear, can be sacrificed with less immediate social cost. But this would be "short term gain for long term pain". A large investment in early childhood education will pay large social dividends in the future.

To meet these interlocking needs, we require a day care system in Canada which will have the following characteristics.

- Day care must be widely available, in rural, urban and and suburban locations, in every province. It must be available locally - close to the child's home (or in

some cases to the parent's place of work). There should be a wide variety of types available: part day and full day, supervised family home care, group care, emergency care, night care for children of shiftworkers, etc.

- Day care must be financially accessible to all. No child should be forced into inadequate, poor quality or unloving care because of lack of financial resources. Because of the high cost of day care, this inevitably means a large amount of government subsidization.
  
- Day care must be universally of high quality. High quality means good facilities, programming, sanitation, high staff-child ratios, and staff who are trained in the care and education of infants and young children. It means adequate financial resources for provision of imaginative programming and it means the opportunity for parent input into the child's development. It also means relatively low staff turnover, which implies greatly improved wages and benefits for day care workers. Maintenance of good quality also implies minimum standards and reporting procedures on the above items.

#### WHAT KIND OF DAY CARE DO WE HAVE NOW IN CANADA?

##### Availability

In 1980 there were 109,141 licensed day care spaces in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Preliminary figures for 1982 indicate that there are approximately 125,000 spaces. This includes all full time day care spaces: group care, supervised family home care, care for infants, preschoolers, integrated facilities for handicapped children, and facilities for night care as well as part-time school age programs.

To provide all children between the ages of 0-9 with access to licensed early childhood education experiences whether full or part-time, would require 3,564,100 such spaces. Facilities in 1980 only served 3% of that population.



TABLE 1

Number and Percentage of day care spaces  
for children ages 0-9 in Canada, by province,  
1980

Province	Total Spaces	No. of Children Ages 0-9	% of Children receiving licensed day care
British Columbia	13,268	346,900	4.72
Alberta	16,404	373,900	3.54
Saskatchewan	3,495	158,600	2.20
Manitoba	4,941	160,100	3.08
Ontario	40,545	1,127,900	3.59
Quebec	23,793	905,400	2.62
New Brunswick	2,659	115,000	2.31
Nova Scotia	2,675	130,000	2.05
P.E.I.	620	20,000	3.10
Newfoundland	491	111,700	0.43
North West Territories	100	10,700	0.93
Yukon	160	4,000	4.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109,141</b>	<b>3,564,100</b>	<b>3.06</b>

Source: Provincial space allocations are quoted from Canada, Health and Welfare, Status of Day Care in Canada, 1980.

Population figures are derived from Canada, Statistics Canada. Postcensal estimates of population by sex and age, Canada and the provinces, June, 1980 (based on 1976 census information).

Unless day care was compulsory, which it certainly should not be, it is unlikely that we would need licensed day care for over 3 million children. What we do need, however, is enough spaces to accommodate children of working parents, children of students, handicapped children, children with special needs who would benefit from a day care experience and children of parents who wish to enroll their children in a program because it would be an enriching experience.

Let us look at the number of spaces needed to accommodate the children of working parents. Using this criterion, there are potentially 1,660,000 children needing day care spaces in Canada, whereas there is provision for only 109,141 of them. This means that fewer than 8% of children in need of care can be accommodated in formal arrangements.

TABLE 2  
Licensed Spaces and Children of Working Mothers  
by age grouping, 1980

Age of Children	No. of Children of Working Mothers	Total Licensed Day Care Spaces	% of Children presently in day care
Under 2	229,000	8,704	3.8
2 - 5	531,000	83,719	15.77
6-9 <sup>2</sup>	900,000	16,718	1.85
TOTAL	1,660,000	109,141	7.58

\* Status of Day Care in Canada, 1980. Children of Working Mothers estimated by Women's Bureau, Labour Canada.

Most of the presently available spaces - nearly 80% - are for 2-5 year olds. Only about 8% are for infants and 15% are for school age children.

TABLE 3  
Distribution of day care centres and spaces<sup>3</sup>  
by age grouping, 1980

Ages of Children	Centres		Family Day Care		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 2	5,288	5.38	3,416	31.33	8,704	7.98
2 - 6	78,534	79.94	5,185	47.56	83,719	76.70
6 and over	14,416	14.68	2,302	21.11	16,718	15.32
TOTAL	98,238	100.00	10,903	100.00	109,141	100.00

Source: Status of Day Care in Canada, 1980.

\*\* There are no estimates for the number of school age children 6-9 years whose mothers are in the workforce. We have estimated 50% of the total child population of that age group based on the participation rate of married women with children in the work

Availability of day care spaces is influenced strongly by the regulations of individual provinces. For example, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and British Columbia do not provide group day care facilities for very young children. In Saskatchewan and B.C. attempts were made to reduce gaps in service by developing family home day care programs. Initially seen as a cost-cutting service, these developments have been curtailed since governments have discovered that they are equally as expensive as group day care.

Little attention has been given to the needs of school-aged children until very recently. Reports that many children of working mothers were returning home alone and the desire of many parents to offer their children more than custodial care with a neighbour or a stranger, prompted the growth of school age care. However, access to licensed day care programs which necessarily need to be located in the proximity of the neighbourhood school is extremely limited. Although the growth of family home day care has accommodated some of the need for school age care, most school-aged children are still placed with a neighbour or sent home with a key around their necks.

Accessibility is also influenced by the hours and days of operation of day care programs. Most day care centres operate between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. This does not accommodate parents who work shifts on a regular or rotating basis. In Ontario, there are two day care centres operating on a 24 hour basis. Governments hoped that family home day care providers would meet some of the needs of children of shiftworkers, but little of this has materialized. In British Columbia, the provision of "in-own-home" day care has been developed to accommodate the needs of shiftworkers.

Integration of handicapped children into day care programs has scarcely begun. In 1980 the recommendations of the Report of the Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (CELDIC) Report advocated integrating handicapped children into day care, nursery schools and other preschool programs.<sup>5</sup> It was widely accepted that day care services can offer early integration for children, relief to families and also offer experiences for the child outside the home. To date, we have no national statistics which provide a clear indication of the percentage of handicapped children integrated in day care programs. We know that in Saskatchewan, day care centres may offer up to 15% of their total child care spaces to handicapped children; (6) that Ontario handicapped children are enrolled mainly in centres operated

specifically for handicapped children and funded directly by the province - only 2% of developmentally handicapped and 1% of physically handicapped children were involved in licensed integrated group day care in 1980; (7) and that in Manitoba the government is beginning to support programs for the handicapped in integrated centres. (8) But by and large the recommendations of the CELDIC Report have not been realized and handicapped children have very little access to regular day care programs across the country.

The day care which does exist is not widely available in a mix of high quality forms. Rather there is a hodge-podge of services varying tremendously from province to province and between city and country. All provinces have enacted enabling legislation authorizing appropriate departments - usually Social Services or Health - to license day care facilities and set out regulations for their operation. With varying levels of commitment, all provincial governments have set aside funds to subsidize the fees of low income parents under the terms of the federal government's Canada Assistance Plan. These funds are then automatically cost-shared 50% by the federal government. All provinces regulate informal babysitting arrangements by restricting the numbers of unrelated children who can be cared for in one dwelling. But here the basic similarities between the provinces ends.

Wide variations exist in quantity, quality, location and type of care, age of care, types of programs, accessibility, sponsorship, staff training, qualifications, government licensing standards and levels of government funding. Some examples: (9)

- \* In Saskatchewan and B.C. (with a few exceptions) children under 18 months are not permitted in group day care centres. In Newfoundland, there is no provision for group day care for children under 2½ years.
- \* In P.E.I. kindergarten programs are licensed under the Child Care Facilities Act and administered as part of the day nursery program.
- \* In Quebec there exists a system of group family day care homes which take up to 9 children with two caregivers. Ontario and Manitoba are in the process of instituting similar programs.

- \* In Newfoundland and New Brunswick there is no family day care supervised and regulated by the government, and in Nova Scotia this kind of program is in its infancy.
- \* B.C. is the only province which supports an emergency day care program with public funds: Granny Y's in Vancouver. It accepts children aged 6 months to 6 years for a period of up to five days at a cost of \$20 per day.
- \* B.C. also operates "in-own-home" day care where a caregiver goes to the child's own home; there are 660 subsidized spaces under this program.

Another variation is the relative weight of the different forms of sponsorship under which day care centres and programs are managed. (10)

- \* Only in Ontario and Alberta do municipal governments contribute directly to the operating costs of day care programs. (In other cities, such as Vancouver, municipalities may pass by-laws controlling standards, location and may contribute to providing space, etc.)
- \* New "for-profit" programs are no longer licensed in Quebec and Saskatchewan. Existing "for-profit" programs have been allowed to continue.
- \* Under new legislation, for-profit programs are licensed but not eligible for government subsidies in Manitoba.
- \* Commercial, for-profit day care centres dominate the provision of service in Alberta and the Atlantic provinces, except Nova Scotia, and account for a substantial portion of service in Ontario.

TABLE 4<sup>11</sup>

Interprovincial Comparison of Day Care Spaces

Provinces	Public Centre Spaces	Community Board Spaces	Parent Cooperative Spaces	Commercial Centre Spaces	Family Day Care Spaces
British Columbia		1 560	4 678	2 530	4 500
Alberta	921	4 863	67	9 972	581
Saskatchewan		90	2 317	89	999
Manitoba		2 871	255	1 334	481
Ontario	7 574	10 127	587	17 995	4 262
Quebec		18 665	245	4 823	60
New Brunswick		1 300		1 349	
Nova Scotia		2 080		595	
Prince Edward Island		150		450	20
Newfoundland		136		355	
Northwest Territories		100			
Yukon		137		23	
National Totals	8 495	42 079	8 149	39 515	10 903

### Financial Accessibility

The cost of day care is high - on average \$200-\$250 per month for a 2-5 year old in full day group care in 1980-81. (12) In other words, between \$2,400 and \$3,000 per year. That takes a very sizeable chunk out of any parent's income, particularly as real incomes decline and unemployment spreads.

Even parents who presently can afford day care on a full fee-paying basis will not be able to afford predicted fee increases. Metropolitan Toronto's Department of Community Services recently completed a broad survey of fee-paying parents. (13) They concluded that 80% of parents would have to withdraw their children if fees rose to accommodate teacher salary levels comparable to Toronto's unionized municipal centres (\$14,000 per annum). In fact, the majority of parents reported that they would seek alternative informal arrangements if group care fees rose by as little as \$10 a week. (13)

Good day care is already financially accessible only to the fairly affluent and to those poor enough to qualify for a big subsidy. This situation is getting worse, rather than better.

What about government subsidies to day care? Governments spent about \$95 million on day care in 1979: \$40 million under the Canada Assistance Plan and about \$22 million in lost revenues under the child care expense tax deduction. (14) (See The Day Care Kit for more information about this.) But this is far from enough in comparison to need.

The problems with government funding are all related to the inadequacies of these basic funding mechanisms. The federal government is involved in direct funding of child care services through the Canada Assistance Plan. This Plan has had a tremendous impact in shaping the provision of day care services in Canada, despite the fact that provision of services is primarily a provincial responsibility. Under the terms of this plan, the federal government cost-shares 50% of certain types of provincial expenditures for day care. The Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) was set up to provide public assistance and welfare services for Canadians who were considered to be "in need". Day care is considered to be a rehabilitation service to assist people with incomes at or near the poverty level who are attempting to find work, continue to work, or study without incurring damage to their children. As a result day care has been seen as a welfare service, custodial and/or preventive in nature.

Families who meet qualifications for social assistance benefits after taking either a "needs" or "income" test or a combination of the two (depending on the provincial government's requirements) may apply to the provincial government for a subsidy towards their day care costs. These families may then be assisted with their day care costs and expenditure laid out by the provincial government on behalf of these families will be cost-shared by the federal government with a 50% return.

Because the federal government only contributes towards the individual costs of families who need day care service and qualify for social assistance, there is no cost-sharing mechanism to cover the majority of day care families. For example, federal government cost-sharing only applies to those parents who are considered to be "in need". That means that capital costs, start-up costs, and maintenance grants, which would benefit all families, would only be subsidized according to the proportion of subsidized children. Provincial governments are not eligible for the entire 50% federal grant if they, say, choose to develop a day care system which gives

direct or block funding to a day care centre towards its total operating budget; if they decided to hand out "vouchers" to compensate day care users for their day care fees regardless of their income; if they gave grants in order to renovate and equip new centres in order to meet the overwhelming need; or any other such universal or radical proposal. If 10% of the children at the centre were subsidized and deemed to benefit from the scheme, then the federal government would cost-share 10% of the costs. In consequence, the provincial governments have tended to limit their spending to items which can be cost-shared.

This basic funding framework has led to the difficulties we are experiencing today. Government funds do not enable the majority of Canadian children to avail themselves of high quality day care services. There are hundreds of thousands of low to middle income families who do not qualify for day care subsidies, but cannot afford the high cost of the fees.

Even though provincial governments may take advantage of the 50% federal cost-sharing for day care costs to individuals considered to be "in need", these governments do not provide adequate funds to meet this need and day care advocates are continually imploring their respective provincial governments to provide additional funds for more subsidized spaces. In Toronto, in June, 1982, for example, there were 593 children on the Metro Toronto Social Services waiting list, approved and waiting for a day care space. (15) In Vancouver, in November, 1981, there were 1962 parents on waiting lists for subsidized day care spaces. (16) This does not include thousands of others who have been turned away, not yet processed or not even aware that day care subsidies exist or that they might be eligible for them.

Per capita expenditures on day care services by provincial governments vary widely also.



TABLE 5

Government expenditures on day  
care by province, 1980

	Total Govt. expenditure on day care 1980	Government expenditures per child 0-5 years per annum	Government Expenditures as a % of total costs,* of day care
Alberta	\$10,488,000	\$51.36	31.06
B.C.	14,838,000	70.82	79.11
Manitoba	4,057,000	42.42	51.47
New Brunswick	544,000	8.05	9.56
Newfoundland	225,000	3.52	20.93
Nova Scotia	2,295,000	31.57	29.08
Ontario	41,319,000	58.01	47.21
P.E.I.	396,000	33.73	36.94
Quebec	16,201,000	29.78	44.86
Saskatchewan	2,496,000	26.25	49.67

\* Source: Alberta. Department of Social Services and Community Health. Interprovincial Comparison: Day Care Facilities, Licensed Full Day Programs, Price Waterhouse Associates, 1980.

\* Day care costs are comprised of provincial, federal (and in the case of Ontario and Alberta, municipal) government funding, plus user charges, and in some cases independent grants from social service agencies, e.g. United Way. This column indicates the percentage of total costs borne by the provincial governments before they have been reimbursed by the federal and municipal governments. Note also that due to the spread of maintenance grants, the 1982-83 expenditures per child in the population figures are considerably different than these. The ranking of provinces is also different. Please see The Day Care Kit for further details.

In addition to providing funds to subsidize the fees of low-income parents, all governments incur administration costs and give a variety of other grants: Alberta, and B.C. have some funds available for capital grants; Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec offer start-up grants both to group and family home day care programs; Nova Scotia gives incentives grants - incentives to keep the costs low; Manitoba gives grants for audit and other miscellaneous purposes; and Ontario has given a variety of grants under its new Initiatives Program, 1981-83.(17)

Perhaps the most significant grant instituted by Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick is the maintenance grant. (Saskatchewan also has a form of maintenance grant, called an equipment grant.) This grant (Manitoba: \$2.90 per diem; Quebec, \$3.00 per diem, Alberta, up to \$10 per diem, New Brunswick \$1.50 per week) has been implemented in an attempt to offset the high operating costs of individual day care programs without placing the entire burden on the fee-paying parents. Every child space, whether the child qualifies for a subsidy or not, is eligible for such a grant although only that portion of the total expenditure attributed to children in subsidized spaces may be cost-shared by the federal government. The significance of this grant is that governments have accepted the principle of providing public funds on a universal basis and not just to those children deemed to be in need of some kind of social assistance. The grants themselves have been insufficient to upgrade substantially the wages and benefits of day care teachers, but have served to keep the costs to fee-paying parents at a lower level than they otherwise would.

In addition to funding under the Canada Assistance Plan, the federal government provides funds to parents by means of the child care expense deduction under the Income Tax Act.

### Quality of Care

Quality in all early childhood programs is dependent on standards for physical space, programming, sanitation, group size, staff-child ratios, and, most important of all, staffing. The contribution of individual day care teachers is probably the chief element in providing high quality day care. In fact, 80% of day care budgets go to staff salaries. Yet, there are very few rewards for this important and responsible job. Salaries for day care teachers are low right across the country - about \$800 - \$850 per month.

TABLE 6: Average Salaries for Day Care Teachers, 1980-81

<u>Province</u>	<u>Monthly Average Salary</u>
British Columbia <sup>1</sup>	850.00
Manitoba <sup>2</sup>	849.00
Saskatchewan <sup>3</sup>	812.00
Ontario <sup>4</sup>	833.00
Quebec <sup>5</sup>	758.00
P.E.I. <sup>6</sup>	677.00
Nova Scotia <sup>7</sup>	883.00

\*. Average salaries are drawn from a number of different sources as indicated below. Clearly, there needs to be a national survey of wages and benefits and working conditions of day care teachers.

1. April, 1980. Social Service Employees Union, Survey.
2. Manitoba, Department of Social Services, unpublished data, 1981.
3. Directors and Staff Questionnaire, 1980, Saskatchewan, Department of Social Services, 1981.
4. Action Day Care and Metro Toronto Social Planning Council, Survey, 1979.
- 5.
6. Department of Health and Social Services, Early Childhood Development Program, 1981. Unpublished data.
7. Salaries reported by North End Day Care, a unionized day care centre in Halifax, June, 1982. It was also reported that college graduates were being employed at the rate of \$25.00 per day.

The low salaries are accompanied by minimal benefits, lack of job security and virtually no opportunities for educational and professional development.

To ensure high quality care, day care programmes must hire excellent staff who know how to offer a stimulating program, apply the principles of child development and offer warm and supportive relationships with the children. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to find well-trained and experienced staff to work in day care programs. Many teachers find that they cannot afford to stay in day care teaching for very long. Consequently there is a very high turnover rate which means that the staff-child relationships are disrupted, as is the smooth operation of the day care program. A study conducted in Toronto in 1979 found that a turnover rate of 50% per annum existed. (18)

At the bottom of the pile are private home caregivers. For as little as \$1.25 per hour they are expected to care for the children for extremely long hours (often from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) in extremely isolated working situations, provide toys and equipment, nutritious snacks and meals, trips and excursions. The 'hidden' costs such as home and furniture depreciation and general wear and tear must also be subtracted from this daily amount. Often their net gain is nil.

Physical space, staff-child ratios, group size, standards of health and safety are also important elements of quality care. Appendix A compares the standards of each province to the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Health and Welfare National Child Care Study. Readers can draw their own conclusions regarding their adequacy. What needs to be stressed, however, is the extent to which regulations are violated. Although there is no documented evidence for this, it is a recurring theme raised by day care providers and users everywhere. Once again, the source of the problem appears to be the lack of funds, other than parent fees, to pay for the implementation of the high standards so necessary for our children's welfare.

#### What Happens to all the other Children?

Over 90% of children in the 0-9 age group participated in informal care arrangements. Nearly 85% of children in the 2-5 age group, where day care provision is strongest, are in informal care. Much of the informal care is with relatives and may be good or bad. Research findings are non-existent. A great deal of informal care is given in private homes, other than the child's. Research findings are not extensive but two good studies exist, one Canadian and one American. Their conclusions as to the quality of informal care arrangements are not comforting. They form a major part of the argument for universally accessible formal day care. (19)

The U.S. study showed that caregivers in informal arrangements spent, on average, 43% of their working day uninvolved with the children - making lunch or snack, doing household chores, on the phone, having a coffee break or a rest. The Canadian study rated caregivers according to the number of creative activities they had provided in the previous week from a list of five choices; outdoor activities on a regular basis; household chores (cooking, shopping); reading or telling stories; arts and crafts; playing records or singing songs. Approximately 50% of caregivers provided no or very few activities. Approximately 50% provided some or many activities.

Consistency of care is a concern in informal care as well. In the U.S. study, almost 50% of the unregulated caregivers were not providing day care one year after the initial contact. In the Canadian study, 40% of caregivers had been providing care for one year or less. About one third had provided care for five or more years. Most informal caregivers have little or no training in early childhood education or related fields.

Perhaps the following statement taken from The Kin Trade by Laura Johnson and Janice Dineen best summarizes the situation:

"The overall picture showed that the majority of caregivers in the study were providing only "adequate custodial-type care". The children whom they looked after were safe and did not go hungry, but there were few other positive things that could be said about the arrangements. The researchers found that vast numbers of children, at an age when they most needed stimulating surroundings, affection and encouragement, and a variety of activities and challenges, games, books and creative projects, were instead being thrown daily into bland and boring situations. They had little opportunity for the physical, intellectual and emotional growth and development that they badly need in their pre-school years." (20)

## HOW DO WE GET HIGH QUALITY, UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE DAY CARE?

How are we going to get a day care system in Canada which is widely available, financially accessible to all and of high quality? From discussions within the day care community, three broad avenues of strategy have emerged. They are:

- (a) amend the Income Tax Act to give larger child care expense deductions (or a child care expenses tax credit);
- (b) establish a publicly-funded, not-for-profit, non-compulsory day care system like the public education system, incorporating a variety of services in neighbourhood day care resource centres;
- (c) Reform the Canada Assistance Plan.

We favour the middle option. In this section we will explore the implications of each option - the pros and cons for the future of day care.

### Day Care as a Business or a Public Service?

In order to explore the pros and cons, however, we need to take a slight detour before plunging ahead. We cannot agree on a strategy for day care until we answer one additional question about the kind of day care system we want. Should day care in Canada be provided primarily by private businesses as it is in the United States? Or should it be provided primarily by public authorities and non-profit corporations as it is in East Germany, France or Sweden? The issue is vital and unavoidable. We want the day care system to expand enormously over the next years - that follows logically from everything we have said. So we have to face the issue of who will provide the service - business or government - and how - for private profit or by public decision. Which vehicle will best get us to our destination?

We think that publicly provided day care is superior to private enterprise day care and we would like to explain why. Our economic system in Canada is, of course, essentially a system of private businesses producing goods and services and selling them in order to make a profit. It is entirely possible to organize the provision of day care on the same basis; in Alberta and all the Atlantic provinces, except Nova Scotia, commercial day care centres are predominant.

Boosters of private enterprise day care have two central arguments to support their cause. We can call them the "choice" argument and the "cost" argument.

The Choice Argument. Private enterprise allows consumers to choose the day care situation they want. Consumers "vote" with their dollars for the type of day care they prefer and businesses, seeking a profit, provide the type of services consumers want. Because parents, as consumers, are the best judges of what day care services are needed, this "voting" process, or buying and selling process, will give society just the right amount and type of day care. The day care system is flexible and responsive to parents' needs, not bureaucratic, monolithic and unresponsive as public and not-for-profit enterprise would be.

The Cost Argument. Private enterprise keeps costs down. In order to stay alive in the competitive race for the consumer's dollar, businesses must produce day care services at the lowest possible price while still producing the quality consumers want. Public and not-for-profit enterprise would be costly and inefficient.

These propositions sound very powerful and persuasive. They should, however, be rejected. They are a misleading guide to what happens in the real world.

We do want choice and variety in the day care system. And we do want low costs as long as quality and fairness to day care workers are not sacrificed. But we do not believe that these features can be achieved in a high quality day care system that meets social needs unless it is based on not-for-profit and public enterprise.

There are four major weaknesses in the private enterprise case:

1. Low costs will mean low quality: Low paid staff are not well-trained, highly-motivated, experienced staff. A study done in 1979 by Action Day Care and the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto showed that wages and benefits were distinctly lower in the for-profit centres.

Average municipal salaries:	\$11,179
Average not-for-profit salaries:	9,392
Average for-profit salaries:	8,042

For-profit day care has a strong incentive to skimp on quality in other ways. It is hard to get firm data on this, but there are

several strong indicators. Michael Krashinsky's study on the economics of day care reported that for-profit operators in Ontario interpret staff-child ratio regulations in a manner different from not-for-profit operators, effectively lowering the number of staff available for each child. In Canada, in 1974 Miniskools Inc. (since purchased by Kindercare, operating 14 centres) successfully lobbied the Ontario government to lower minimum standards of existing day care legislation. The Ontario government introduced the infamous "Birch Proposals" to lower staff-child ratios. These were widely condemned in the day care community and eventually defeated.

Lobby groups in the United States composed mainly of profit-oriented operators have sought to lower staff-child ratios, to lower training requirements for day care workers and to raise maximum capacities and group sizes per facility. (27)

This analysis of the record of profit-oriented operators is contradicted somewhat by the existence of very dedicated private owner-operators of a substantial number of day care centres at present. Often these individuals who do not run chains and seem to have no corporate ambitions are willing to cut profits to improve quality. Often these individuals were former day care workers themselves or social workers with a genuine mission to improve day care services. The characteristics of these operators are, however, a poor guide to the character of profit-oriented day care in the future. Most new profit-oriented centres will be in business primarily to make money. This can only be done by cutting costs, and in day care that means cutting quality.

2. Parents do not have adequate information. In theory, private enterprise is a very sensitive responsive system because consumers have all the information about the products and product quality as well as about their own needs. Consumers will punish poor quality producers by boycotting their product. But parents do not have this information about day care and most cannot get it. Only one parent in five will have the time and resources to monitor their day care centre adequately to find out what really goes on, how good the care is for their child and compare that to the price and quality of ten competing day care centres. Parent choice is very important, as is parent involvement in day care whenever possible. But parent choice of day care is not an adequate guarantee of quality in the system; the private enterprise argument thinks it is.



3. Parent choices may not fully reflect social needs. Education is provided publicly in Canada because many children would not get enough schooling if parents had to pay for it privately. This is only one example of a much bigger problem - private decisions to buy goods and services do not always correspond to public needs.

Children need good day care, women and men need good day care, society needs good day care as we outlined in the first section of this paper. Those needs will not be met if private individuals make all the buying decisions, because many of the benefits do not go exclusively to the person making the purchase. Benefits from early childhood education go to society as well in increased productivity, lower crime and welfare rates and a happier citizenry.

4. Only parents with money have the right to choose. Private enterprise gives "voting" rights only to those with enough dollars. Even if parents had perfect information and fully reflected social needs in their decisions to purchase day care services, many children would not have access to day care. Their needs would not be met because their parents had insufficient income to purchase the service. At \$3000 a year per child, many parents' incomes are presently insufficient.

The arguments convince us to favour a not-for-profit and public day care system. We are seeking a massive expansion of day care facilities across Canada - at least a tenfold expansion. Should this expansion be met by profit-oriented operators, including a large component of corporate sponsored chain day care? Or should it be met by various forms of not-for-profit and publicly-owned and operated care? This is the crucial issue.

Many day care activists, ourselves included, believe that profit-oriented day care should eventually have no role in the care and education of our young children. Therefore, scarce government funds should be given for the delivery of day care services the organizations which are publicly approved and publicly accountable, rather than being spent to encourage the expansion of service by profit-oriented care of dubious quality.

Let us now look at the three options for strategy listed earlier.

OPTION A: AMEND THE INCOME TAX ACT

Under Section 63 of the Income Tax Act, child care expenses may be deducted from taxable income, up to a maximum of \$1000 per child (maximum 4 children). They are deductible by any working mother, but a working father may only claim if he is a single parent, or if the mother is incapable of caring for her children through imprisonment or mental or physical infirmity. Expenses are also deductible if a mother is training under the Adult Occupational Training Act, or doing research under a grant. Receipts proving payments for child care must be available and the tax form requires that the name and address of the person or organization which provided the care and, in the case of an individual caregiver, her social insurance number be provided. No deduction is permitted for child care expenses paid to a relative under 21 or to a dependent of the taxpayer. (21)

This child care expense deduction presently provides little relief to parents using child care services. For a single woman with one child in day care earning \$10,000 per annum and claiming basic personal exemptions in 1981 she would save \$248.20 in income tax. A single mother earning \$20,000 would save \$297.60 in income tax and if that same single mother with one child earned \$30,000, she would save \$383.80 in income tax. (22) Not only does this provide very little relief on a total annual budget of \$3,000 in day care fees, but it also allows those with higher incomes to gain a greater monetary advantage as a result of claiming this deduction.

There is now a sizeable lobby in Canada to allow day care users to deduct the full amount of their child care costs from their income for income tax purposes in order to provide some relief to fee-paying parents. This movement has been spearheaded by organizations such as Parents for Equitable Tax Treatment in Toronto. This organization formed in response to the increase in minimum wage for foreign domestic workers and is arguing that the child care tax deduction presently provides very little help because it does not cover the full cost of the expense and that it unfairly discriminates against employers of nannies.

If we use the same example of the single mother earning different amounts, as above, the full deduction of child care expenses would mean the following if each parent deducted \$3,000 for their actual expenses. (22)

Gross income	Tax Payable without child care deduction	Tax Payable with child care deduction	Tax saving
\$10,000	\$389.70	Nil	\$389.70
20,000	3,182.70	2,271.90	910.80
30,000	6,491.70	5,415.40	1,076.30

Tax deductions benefit rich people more than they help poor people. The person earning \$10,000 would save \$7.50 a week in day care fees; the \$20,000 earner would save \$17.60 per week and the \$30,000 earner would save \$20.85. For the higher income earner this is indeed a significant amount, but clearly discriminatory and hardly supportable.

The deduction is also discriminatory and assumes that the burden of child-rearing is the sole responsibility of women. It does this by requiring that single fathers may only claim the deduction if they obtain a separation order. A wife may claim the deduction regardless of the husband's absence or presence and regardless of the husband's activities. But the man may only claim the deduction if the wife is not available to care for the children because she is incompetent, mentally or physically infirm, or is imprisoned. Thus a working wife with a student husband may claim the deduction, but a working husband with a student wife may not.

It has been suggested in some quarters that a tax credit, instead of a tax deduction, would be fairer to poor parents and could be made to apply equally to husbands or wives. A tax credit would, for instance, give every tax payer 25% of the value of his/her legitimate child care expenses as a credit against taxes to be paid. A credit is fairer because the percentage of expenses refunded does not depend upon how high your taxable income is. Everyone would get the same 25% refund.

The tax credit scheme, along with the tax deduction plan, are still subject to important weaknesses, however. The majority of Canadian parents paying for child care are not able to claim the present tax deduction and would not be able to claim a tax credit. They are using private babysitters who give no receipts (in order to avoid paying taxes because their income is so low). Without receipts, tax deductions or credits cannot be claimed. Receipts are available from day care centres and employers of nannies. Low and middle income earners tend to use the cheaper sitters and so they are unable to benefit from these tax-saving schemes.

Perhaps the most important argument against the tax deduction/credit proposal is that it will encourage the day care system in Canada to evolve in an adverse direction. The income tax deduction/credit would provide an irresistibly enticing lure to profit-oriented day care. Other strategies would not.

Let us explain briefly. Giving extra money to parents for day care sounds like a good idea. But it presumes, as we have said, that parents can and will make just the right purchasing decisions to ensure that private day care businesses meet social needs and provide low cost, high quality care. But parents do not have the necessary information about the long term effects of different forms of care or the present quality of a wide variety of competing programs to make adequate decisions. They will tend to favour low cost day care, as parents do now, without adequate regard for the importance of quality early childhood education to the child and the social benefits from this early development. Therefore we will get a mix of good, fair and bad forms of care with the affluent, educated parents getting the best care for their children and poorer, less educated parents being rooked by private operators.

We do not need to speculate about what a private enterprise child care system will be like. We do not need to guess whether it will tend to foster high quality forms of care or not. We now have a child care system (not just organized day care, but the hundreds of thousands of private babysitters as well) that is mainly a private enterprise one, buying and selling for private gain. The studies we have cited earlier suggest that quality is too often poor and usually only fair. Of course the system would change if more money were available in parents' hands. Bigger businesses would take over from private babysitters. But parent choice on the private market would still not guarantee a good day care system. We believe a publicly funded system of not-for-profit day care is necessary to ensure that.

**OPTION B: ESTABLISH A PUBLICLY-FUNDED, NOT-FOR-PROFIT DAY CARE SYSTEM, INCORPORATING A VARIETY OF SERVICES IN NEIGHBOURHOOD DAY CARE CENTRES.**

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We have argued in this paper that if we want high quality day care and education for our young children, we will have to have supervised, regulated care rather than informal, unsupervised care. That care is already expensive and will have to become more so if we are to lower staff turnover and attract high quality, well-trained workers. If we want this care to be widely available, we will need at least a tenfold expansion. In order for this care to be financially accessible to the children of working parents, where the biggest need exists, there will have to be a very high level of government subsidization. We have argued that this subsidization makes sense to meet the needs of children, the needs of parents, and the needs of society. Furthermore, we have argued that it would be unwise to rely on profit-oriented centres to meet these needs. The day care movement's best strategy is to fight for complete public funding of not-for-profit programs. This would be the best route to achieving a widely available, financially accessible, high quality day care system in Canada.

As mentioned earlier, day care in Canada is under provincial jurisdiction with federal funding participation under the Canada Assistance Plan. There has been considerable discussion in Canada about providing day care under existing education jurisdiction. We do not discuss the pros and cons of that scenario here; rather we are proposing one possible format which suggests the roles of both provincial and federal governments in general terms and assumes that the question of ministerial jurisdiction be left, where it belongs, to the individual provinces. The format for this type of option would be as follows:

The federal government would establish a new cost-shared program under a new National Child Care Act (i.e. day care funding would no longer occur under the Canada Assistance Plan). The federal government would pay 50% of all operating, capital and other associated costs of various types of approved child care established in each province. The federal government funding would be contingent upon:

- (a) child care facilities meeting certain national standards of quality; and

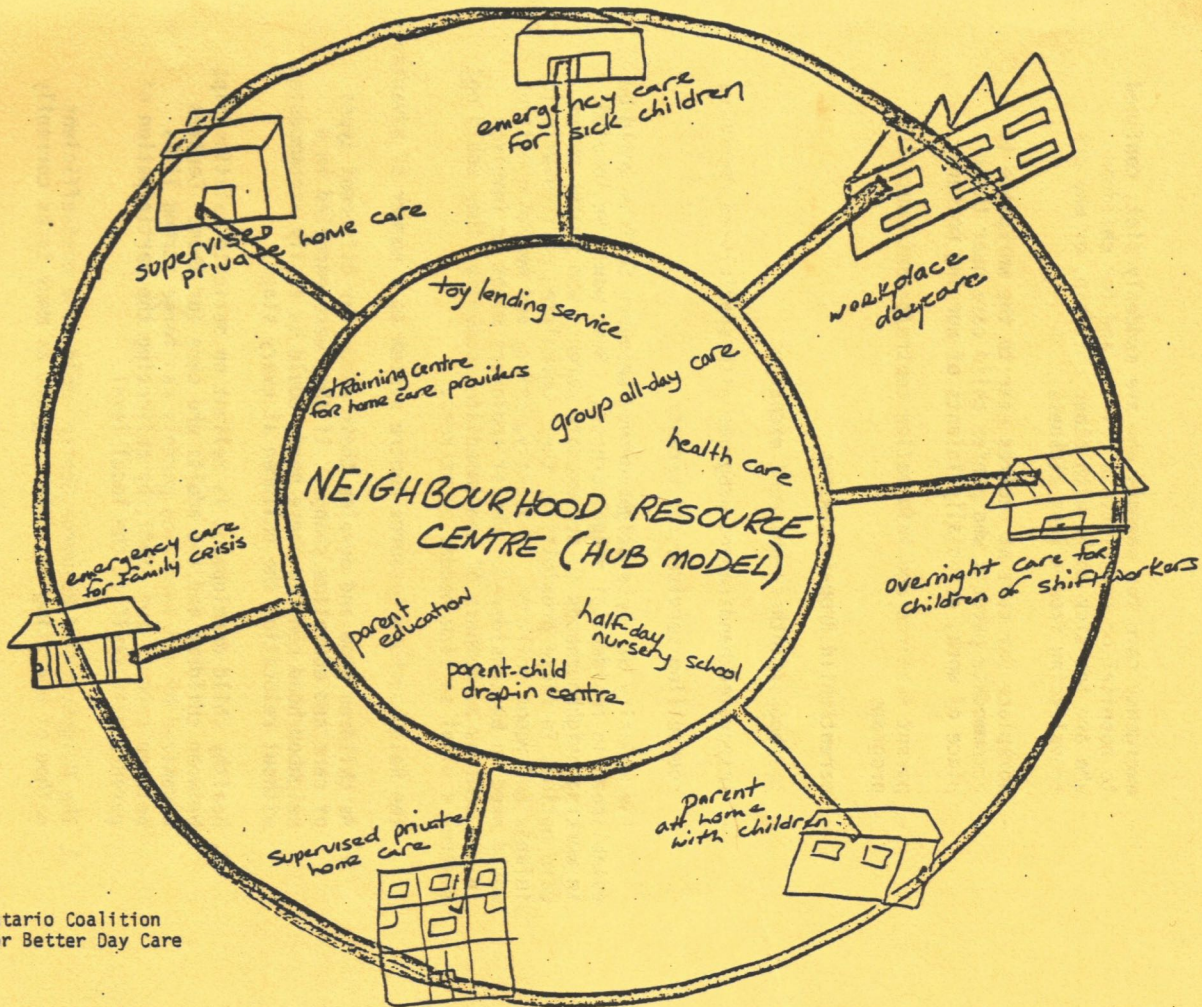
- (b) child care facilities being universally available in each province. (The suggested definition of universally available - facilities must be provided whenever twenty families within a certain radius can demonstrate a need for child care facilities).

The provincial governments would provide the balance of the fees - there could be a small user fee - and would be responsible, as they are now, for licensing, regulations, standards (within the federal minimum standards) and administration. It would be up to provinces to decide whether child care services be administered under education; social services, human resources, etc.

Initiatives for the establishment of new centres could come from individual municipalities, from community groups, from parent groups or other institutions. This would ensure a mix of types and philosophies as at present.

In municipalities larger than a certain size, the federal and provincial governments should encourage the development of neighbourhood resource centres. These centres would aim to provide a comprehensive approach to day care which would broaden and enrich the program possibilities and would co-ordinate present programs which are scattered or isolated. These resource centres would generally have available the following facilities (also illustrated in the diagram):

- licensed group day care centres with flexible hours
- licensed family day care offering flexible hours and overnight care, with caregivers employed by the centre and paid on the same basis as other employees at the centre.
- school age programs to accommodate children needing morning care, lunch time programs, afternoon, evening and school holidays.
- overnight care in the child's own home for parents who work on awkward or rotating shifts and have transportation difficulties.
- part-time programs for parents who choose to stay at home, who choose private arrangements but would like their child to experience some peer interaction or for children of part-time workers



- emergency care for parents who are suddenly sick, confined to hospital or experience a crisis; and for children who are too sick to be with other children, or who are convalescing from a long sickness
- workplace day care at centres near to the workplace to accommodate parents who prefer child care near their place of work, especially infants of nursing mothers
- parent resource and information centre/parent education programs
- parent/child drop-in centres
- toy/books/clothes/equipment exchanges
- integrated handicapped programs with specialized resources
- counselling services for parents

The majority of these Neighbourhood Resource Centres would be established in residential neighbourhoods. Some would be located in working neighbourhoods to accommodate parents who prefer child care options in close proximity to their workplace, particularly for infants and young children. Obviously, safety and health questions would need to be considered. Whilst employers might be involved in the centres as members of the immediate community, they would not control a vital service needed by workers.

The Neighbourhood Resource Centre system as a number of advantages:

1. As children grow and develop their needs for different types of care and education change. If they were enrolled in a neighbourhood centre, these needs could be easily accommodated without relocating the children at every stage.
2. Healthy child development is reliant on delicate relationships between children and the adults who care for them.. Centres organized by and involving parents can forge strong links between parents and staff, by reflecting the participation of parents with staff at the local level.
3. The Neighbourhood Resource Centre would be a cost-efficient method of operating day care programs as many tasks currently



being replicated in many different locations could be co-ordinated and minimized.

4. Establishing a planned day care system and setting up neighbourhood resource centres would lend prestige to day care as a service and provide the basis for upgrading standards of operation and staff salaries.
5. Providing opportunities for staff growth and development without constant turnover.
6. It would be easier to monitor standards of care.
7. It would be easier to keep a record on children's problems and development and develop consistent, ongoing support services.

In rural areas, resource centres would be smaller in scale and would operate small group programs and drop-in centres combined with extensive family day care and an efficient transportation system.

The major drawback to the publicly-funded scheme is, of course, its high cost. An estimate of \$3.5 billion per year for operating costs does not seem unreasonable. This is only one per cent of Canada's annual gross national product, but nonetheless is a substantial figure. Governments, particularly in a period of financial cutbacks, will not welcome the proposal. The logic that we have presented in this paper lead us unavoidably to believe, however, that this is the right perspective for the future of day care in Canada. These arguments and this spirit is the one that should guide our activities - separate or collective - in fighting for more and better day care in Canada.

## OPTION C: REFORMING THE CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN

Some day care activists do not want to see day care drift in a commercial direction, but think that universally accessible and publicly-funded day care is not attainable at the present time. Consequently, they suggest that it might be possible to amend the current terms of the Canada Assistance Plan to move part way towards our goals. This would require some basic changes:

### (a) Framework

Presently CAP is intended to give support to families who are "in need" or who are considered "likely to be in need". This means that those families live on incomes at or below the provincial social assistance levels and thus qualify for a subsidy in the same way that they would qualify for welfare. Advocates for reform propose a lobby of the federal government, suggesting that the CAP regulations be interpreted much more broadly. For the purposes of providing funds towards capital, start-up, and maintenance grants, they suggest that the interpretation of "likely to be in need" should extend to all children and not just those who qualify under the economic guidelines. They argue that this would pave the way for provincial governments to apply for federal cost-sharing of day care grants of a universal nature, such as capital, start-up and maintenance grants, whilst leaving the basic subsidy system intact.

### (b) Proposed Funding Changes

Some of the basic changes in the funding system suggested are as follows:

- (i) Extend the terms of CAP to cover 50% of capital and start-up grants regardless of whether they accrue to the benefit of subsidized children, or to a combination of subsidized and fee-paying.
- (ii) Extend the terms of CAP to cover 50% cost-sharing of maintenance grants for all child care spaces in not-for-profit day care programs, up to a maximum of 50% of operating costs. Maintenance grants already exist in four provinces and are a per diem grant from the province per child space to assist with the total operating costs. Maintenance grants paid to non-subsidized child spaces are not cost-shareable at the federal level. Under this proposal, maintenance grants would be cost-shared by the federal government for all child spaces and not just

those with subsidized children. This grant could then be used to improve staff salaries and hence upgrade the quality of the programs without passing these costs along to fee-paying parents.

- (iii) Raise the maximum income levels at which parents are eligible for subsidies to accommodate more low-to-middle income parents in subsidized spaces.
- (iv) Reduce the amount partially-subsidized parents are required to pay from 50% to 25% of available income in excess of provincial "turning points".
- (v) Require the federal government to contribute a higher share (say 75%) of the cost of subsidized infant day care provided by provincially approved, not-for-profit spaces.

The essential problem with these proposals, to repeat an old saying, is that "you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." CAP was not designed to set up a national day care system. It was designed to assist candidates for welfare with services that would allow them to continue to work or study. Under CAP it is, and will remain, a welfare service, will be seen as a welfare service and used as one. Applicants for subsidy, especially in provinces using means tests, are obliged to submit their personal lives and incomes for public scrutiny. How can we support a system which forces parents to humiliate and degrade themselves in search of a service which should be a right?

Contrast this situation to the public education system. At age 6 all children have the right to attend school paid for by public funds. It is a universal service available to all children regardless of their parents' income; it is free; viewed positively and without stigma. Why should such a situation prevail for children age 6, but not age 3?

These changes would not be enough to achieve the much-needed transformation. The improvements would either stabilize parent fees at current levels or allow wages to rise to some degree, but not both. It is not enough to encourage the vast expansion and improvements so critically needed. It means that the hundreds of thousands of children in unsupervised, informal settings will still have no access to the system and so the basic foundation of day care in this country will remain unchanged. Finally, the proposed amendments to CAP will provide no mechanism for establishing and enforcing quality standards across the country.

**STRATEGIES FOR ACTION: HOW TO WIN UNIVERSALLY-ACCESSIBLE, PUBLICLY-FUNDED DAY CARE IN CANADA**

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With the current funding mechanisms and conservative government attitudes in the provinces, our day care system will continue to deteriorate unless governments implement immediate improvements. In order to ensure the delivery of a high quality, widely-accessible system, the government must commit itself to creating a well-organized, universally accessible, publicly-funded, not-for-profit, non-compulsory day care system. Our governments have not made that commitment and there is no reason to expect that they will until they clearly understand that it is a day care system like this that the parents and children of Canada need.

Bringing these demands to the attention of government will take a long-term concerted campaign directed simultaneously at the federal and provincial levels. This will involve a national campaign with broad-sweeping demands for publicly-funded day care which will serve to move the day care community on to the offensive and educate politicians and the public about the enormous gap between need and supply. In addition, our campaign must develop a series of short-term goals which will be realizable in the short term and move us in the direction of a universally-accessible, publicly funded system.

**Long-term Goals:**

A long-term goal which could encompass the range of needs for day care in Canada is the establishment by the federal government of a cost-shared program under a new National Child Care Act. If this were to be enacted, day care funding would no longer occur under the Canada Assistance Plan. Under this proposed Act, the federal government would pay 50% of all operating, capital and other associated costs of various types of approved child care to be established in each province. Provincial governments would provide the balance of the fees and would be responsible, as they are now, for licensing, regulations, standards (within the federal minimum standards) and administration. Federal government funding would be contingent upon provincial governments doing the following:

- (a) establishing child care facilities meeting national standards of quality;
- (b) making child care facilities universally available in each province. (See Background paper for suggested definition.)
- (c) setting up day care facilities within each province to provide a variety of models of delivery of care with a large component of parent control.

These goals would be our ultimate objectives, but we should begin now to make major gains and should organize an immediate campaign based on short-term goals.

#### Short-Term Goals:

The suggested short-term goals would move Canada's day care system in the direction of universally accessible day care and have the possibility of being immediately implemented.

- (a) the provision by the federal government under new legislation of a \$5 per day supplement to not-for-profit day care centres for every child enrolled in a licensed child care space - the amount to be pro-rated depending upon whether the child is enrolled in a full-time, part-time, infant, preschool, school-age, handicapped or other type of program.
- (b) provision that the provincial governments be required to match the \$5 per day supplement in order to qualify for the federal supplement; and
- (c) immediate appointment by the federal government of a parliamentary standing committee to make recommendations for the establishment of a national universally-accessible publicly-funded, non-compulsory day care system under a new National Child Care Act. The terms of reference of such a committee would include:
  - Methods of funding
  - Federal-provincial liaison
  - National standards
  - Models of delivery of service.

The campaign would include the following kinds of activities:

- Setting up a national organizing committee made up of representatives from each province;
- Setting up provincial, regional and/or local committees to support the activities of the national campaign.
- Producing a newsletter in order to educate parents and advocates across the country, to inform them about current issues and activities and to mobilize support for the campaign;
- Beginning to lobby MPs and MPPs across the country about the Campaign's demands.
- Organizing a major national action in 1983.
- Beginning now to organize activities which will lead to making day care a major issue in the coming federal and provincial elections.
- Developing ongoing activity in the media which would provide information about the day care crises and the national campaign's efforts.

It is important to remember that ten years ago we were still attempting to convince governments that they should contribute to day care at all. Our strategy at that time focused on expanding the subsidy system and improving quality. Although we are no longer in the position of having to debate policy matters on whether or not day care is good for children, it is clear that the continuously escalating need for day care can no longer be met under the welfare system we have worked with for so long. As we are still a very long way from achieving a system of universally-accessible day care, we have to build a campaign that works towards achieving it.

APPENDIX A

MINIMUM STAFF:CHILD RATIOS IN FULL DAY DAY CARE CENTRES BY PROVINCE, AUGUST, 1982

Ages	B.C.	Alta.	Sask.	Man.	Ont.	Que.	N.B.	N.S.	PEI	Nfld.	NWT	Yukon
0-18 ms.	-	1:3	-	1:4	1:3.3	1:7	1:3	1:7	1:3	-	-	1:6
18-24 "	1:4	1:5	1:5	1:4	1:4.7	1:7	1:3	1:7	1:3	-	-	1:6
2-3	1:4	1:5	1:10*	1:8	1:8.5 <sup>+</sup>	1:10	1:5	1:7	1:5	1:6	-	1:8
3-4	1:8	1:8	1:10	1:8	1:8.5	1:10	1:5	1:7	1:10	1:8	-	1:8
4-5	1:8	1:8	1:10	1:8	1:8.5	1:10	1:10	1:7	1:10	1:8	-	1:8
5-6	1:8	-	1:10	1:8	1:11	1:10	1:10	1:15	1:12	1:8	-	-
6-7	-	-	1:15	1:15	1:15	-	1:15	1:15	1:12	1:15	-	-
Over 7	-	-	1:15	1:15	1:15	-	1:15	1:15	1:15	1:15	-	-

SOURCE: The above regulations are derived from the most recent day care regulations from each province. See individual provincial regulations for exact legislation.

\*1:5 up to 30 months, 1:10 after that

<sup>+</sup>Ontario staff:child ratios vary according to group size. The ratios quoted here are the minimums allowed. See Ontario Regulations for exact details.

Compare these provincial regulations with the recommendations of The National Day Care Study carried out by ABT Associates and commissioned by the U.S. federal government.

Pre-Schoolers (Ages 3-5)

- (a) Group size shall be less than or equal to 19 children and staff:child ratio shall equal or exceed 1:7
- (b) Group size shall be less than or equal to 16 children and staff:child ratio shall equal or exceed 1:8
- (c) Group size shall be less than or equal to 18 children and staff: child ratio shall equal or exceed 1:9

Infants and Toddlers (Ages 0-3)

Group size shall be limited to eight or twelve for infants and twelve for toddlers and the staff: child ratio shall equal 1:4

## FOOTNOTES

1. There has been a dramatic increase in the participation of women in the workforce over the last decade, particularly women with very young children. Working mothers with children under 3 years of age increased by 176% between 1976 and 1980.

<u>WORKING MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 6 YEARS: 1967 AND 1980 AND 1981</u>			
	<u>All mothers with children under 6</u>	<u>Working Mothers with children under 6</u>	<u>% of working mothers with children under 6</u>
1967	1,648,000	275,000	16.7
1980	1,518,000	610,000	40.2
1981		719,000	47.5

Source: Women's Bureau, Canada Department of Labour. Working Mothers and their Child Care Arrangements, Ottawa, 1970; unpublished statistics for 1980 from Women's Bureau, Labour Canada; and unpublished statistics for 1981 from Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Labour force predictions suggest that this trend will continue in the future and that the labour participation rates of men and women will approach equality by the year 2000 (Dodge Task Force, 1980).

It is useful to note that women continue to be segregated into a large number of occupations. In 1980, 62.7% of women in the workforce were confined to the three occupational categories: clerical, sales and service. (Labour Force Survey, 1980). Women suffer higher rates of unemployment than men: 8.3% vs. 7.1% in 1981 (Labour Force, 1981); and of course, women still only earned 63.3% of what men earned in 1980 (Women's Bureau, Labour Canada, unpublished statistics).

2. Canada. Health and Welfare. Status of Day Care in Canada, Ottawa, 1980.
3. Canada. Statistics Canada. Postcensal estimates of population by sex and age, Canada and the provinces, June 1980 (based on 1976 census information); unpublished statistics.
4. Status of Day Care in Canada, 1980, op. cit.
5. Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children. One Million Children (CELDIC Report), Toronto, 1970.
6. Saskatchewan. Department of Social Services, Day Care Review, 1980, p. 89.
7. Ontario. Ministry of Community and Social Services, Day Care Policy: Background Paper, Toronto, 1981, p. 23.



8. Manitoba. Ministry of Community Services and Corrections, Child Care Program. Oral communication.
9. These examples were selected from information, both written and oral, received from the relevant departments in each province.
10. The information regarding sponsorship is drawn from reports, briefs, legislation and letters received from the various provinces.
1. Canada. Health and Welfare. Status of Day Care in Canada, 1980., p.11.
2. From an unpublished table of day care fees in the provinces compiled by the authors.
3. Metropolitan Toronto. Community Services and Policy and Planning Divisions, "Day Care Affordability, An Analysis of its Causes, Impact and Policy Options".
4. Canada. Status of Women. estimate.
5. Metropolitan Toronto. Department of Community Services and Housing. Oral communication, June, 1982.
6. Vancouver Sun, November 3, 1981.
7. Examples of provincial government expenditures are drawn from materials received from various provincial government departments. They will be available in tabloid form as soon as all the current data has been collected and analysed by the authors.
8. Action Day Care and Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Effects of Government Restraints on Day Care Services in Metropolitan Toronto. Toronto, 1980.
9. ABT Associates, Children at the Centre. Final Report of the National Day Care Study, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979.  
Johnson, Laura Climenko. Taking Care. A Report of the Project Child Care Survey of Parents and their Child Care Arrangements. Community Day Care Coalition and Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Toronto, 1977.
10. Johnson, Laura C. and Dineen, Janice. The Kin Trade, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, Toronto, 1981, p. 31-32
11. For an in depth review of Section 63 of the Income Tax Act see Fraser, Anna, The More You Have, The More You Get. An examination of Section 63 of the Income Tax Act, The Child Care Deduction, Project Child Care Working Paper #5, July, 1978.
12. Calculated from 1981 Income Tax Returns by the authors.
13. Johnson, Laura C. Taking Care, op. cit. Table 3:20
14. For further discussion of this issue see Anna Fraser, The More You Have, The More You Get, op. cit.; Delude, Louise, Women and the Personal Income Tax System, Canadian Advisory Council on Status of Women, April, 1976; and the Carter Commission on Taxation.

25. Krashinsky, Michael, Day Care and Public Policy in Ontario, Ontario Economic Council, Toronto, 1979.
26. Action Day Care and Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, Effects of Government Restraints on Day Care Services in Metropolitan Toronto, op. cit.
27. National Association for Child Care Management, "You Take Care of a Lot of Children. Who's Taking Caring of You", in NACCM Newsletter, 1980.
28. Mathien, Julie. "Day Care in Canada", unpublished paper, 1981.

## HOW DOES THE CONFERENCE FIT INTO THIS STRATEGY?

The conference brochure begins by asking the question, "Why a Conference?" It answers it by stating: "Changes in family structure, mothers in the labour force, and urbanization in Canada have led to the need for day care, which is not being met adequately." The Conference has defined its task as suggesting appropriate solutions to the problem of the need for day care. At the conference, there will, of course, be a variety of points of view, backgrounds, perspectives and experiences. However, there are a large number of people attending who agree that the only feasible solution to our day care problems is implementation of a universal system. Hence, the Conference is an excellent time to begin organizing for this. A series of resolutions is attached which bear on the strategy outlined here. We suggest that these resolutions be presented to the conference. In order to organize for this, we would like to discuss this strategy and its goals at a caucus meeting, entitled "National Campaign for Universal Day Care" on Thursday, September 23rd at the Conference Centre.

### Proposed Resolutions

WHEREAS changes in family structure, mothers in the labour force, and urbanization in Canada have led to the need for day care which is not being met adequately;

AND WHEREAS the fees for day care services are too high for most parents to afford;

AND WHEREAS parents who are eligible for a government subsidy are not automatically entitled to such subsidy;

AND WHEREAS the quality in many day care programs is not high enough to provide the excellent care and educational experiences our children need;

AND WHEREAS the salaries of day care teachers remain appallingly low;

AND WHEREAS a total transformation in Canada's day care system is needed in order to rectify the current crisis:

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That the federal government commit itself to the provision of quality universally-accessible, publicly-funded, non-compulsory day care for every family who needs or wants it;
2. That the federal government immediately pass legislation to provide for a federal child supplement of \$5 per day to every child enrolled in an approved, not-for-profit, licensed child care program (pro-rate for infants, handicapped children, school-age and part-time programs)
3. That the federal government require provincial governments to match this grant in the same amount as a condition of providing the supplement;
4. That the federal government immediately appoint a parliamentary standing committee to:
  - (a) make recommendations for the establishment of a universally-accessible, non-compulsory, publicly-funded, high quality day care system in Canada under a National Child Care Act;
  - (b) make recommendations with regard to the implementation of minimum national standards.
5. AND THAT the federal government immediately set up and fund a community-run day care development organization to assist in the development of new not-for-profit day care programs.

WHEREAS fundamental changes are needed in Canada's day care system and the need for new, improved legislation has not seriously been recognized by this government

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. THAT this Conference agree to undertake a national campaign based on the demand for a \$5 per day federal supplement to all approved, not-for-profit day care programs for each child enrolled (such amount to be pro-rated for different programs such as infant, handicapped, school-age, part-time or full-time);
2. THAT this Conference elect a committee to co-ordinate a national child care campaign;
3. THAT such a committee be represented by two people from each province and territory;
4. THAT this Conference demand that the federal government provide funds to support the efforts of the national committee;
5. AND THAT the steering committee ensure that a national newsletter be regularly published and undertake to organize a series of activities leading up to the next federal election.