

N.D.P. Recommendations

S U M M A R Y

1. NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR CHILD CARE

We recommend a national program for child care be introduced in short, medium and long term stages to work towards development of child care which would be:

- accessible and affordable to Canadian families no matter what their income, employment status or where they live or work;
- comprehensive and flexible enough to meet their family needs;
- developed with parent and community participation to meet the social, physical, language and intellectual needs of their children in a caring and safe environment; and
- non-profit to ensure optimal use of public funds and public accountability.

SHORT TERM - 1987 to 1992

2. DIRECT FEDERAL GRANTS

We recommend that the federal government provide direct grants to the provinces and territories for up to the next five years to:

- stabilize current child care services;
- encourage growth of new services;
- provide for new and expanded facilities and equipment;
- initiate care for children with special needs; and
- improve the wages and benefits of child care workers.

These grants would be for both operating and capital costs and available for licensed, non-profit child care on the following basis:

- Operating grants: -- \$8 per day for a disabled child;
- \$5 per day for an infant or special needs child;
 - \$4 per day for a pre-school child or for school-aged children when school is not in session; and
 - \$2 per day for a child needing after-school or half-day care.

- Capital grants: -- \$1,500 for a disabled child;
- \$1,000 for a child under the age of 6;
 - \$500 for a child over the age of 6; and
 - \$500 for a child in family home care.

For 1987, the federal government should budget \$247 million for operating grants and \$21 million for capital grants.

3. CHILD CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ACT

We recommend that the federal government introduce a "child care and family support services act" in 1987.

This legislation would initiate a staged introduction of cost-shared funding by the federal government and the provinces and territories for child care.

The federal government would:

- cost-share with the provinces and territories up to 50% of the operating costs for these services with the remaining 50% to be recovered from parent fees. In all, the federal government would

contribute from 25 to 40% of public funding depending upon the economic status of the region.

- cost-share with the provinces and territories 100% of the capital costs for these services. In all, the federal government would contribute from 50 to 80% of public funding depending upon the economic status of the region.

Provinces and territories entering into new funding agreements with the federal government under "the child care and family support services act" prior to 1991 would be assured of federal funding at least equal to the non-matching grants.

4. COMMUNITY INITIATIVES FUND

We recommend that the federal government establish a "community initiatives fund" for the next five years to encourage development of new child care services in Canadian regions where services are inadequate or non-existent such as rural, remote and native communities.

This fund would specifically encourage community and family participation in the development of non-profit services to meet local needs.

The federal government should budget \$26 million in 1987 for this fund.

5. CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT FUND

We recommend that the federal government establish a "child care development fund" for the next five years to encourage:

- new services targetted at special needs such as children at risk, disabled children, immigrant groups and teen-age parents;
- development of family support services including parenting skills and education programs and resource materials;
- development of early childhood education research and materials; and

- new opportunities for early childhood education and caregiver training.

The federal government should budget \$26 million in 1987 for this fund.

6. SECRETARIAT FOR CHILDREN

We recommend the establishment of a Secretariat For Children within Health and Welfare Canada to:

- support the federal government's discussions with the provinces and territories on the implementation of the "child care and family support services act";
- promote and administer the "community initiatives" and "child care development" funds; and
- promote recommendations for additional family support and child care initiatives which could be undertaken by the federal government.

7. MATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

We recommend that the federal government change the Unemployment Insurance Act to give both men and women new opportunities to stay at home for a longer period with higher benefit levels following the birth or adoption of their child.

Changes should include:

- In 1987, increasing the level of benefits to 66 2/3% of salary, up to maximum insurable earnings, and extending the maternity leave benefit period to 17 weeks;
- In 1988, increasing the level of benefits to 75% of salary, up to maximum insurable earnings, and extending the benefit period to 26 weeks making either parent eligible for this additional parental leave.

8. LEAVE FOR FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

We recommend that the federal government change the Canada Labour Code to provide for 10 days of paid leave for parents for family-related responsibilities.

MEDIUM TERM - 1992 -

9. CHILD CARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ACT

We recommend that the "child care and family support services act" be implemented and that direct federal grants end.

10. MATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

We recommend that maternity and parental leave benefits be increased to 85% of salary, up to maximum insurable earnings, and that the benefit period be extended to 34 weeks.

LONG TERM -

11. NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR CHILD CARE

We recommend that the federal government and the provinces and territories move to full public funding of child care and that parent fees, Canada Assistance Plan subsidies, and child care tax provisions be phased out.

12. MATERNITY AND PARENTAL LEAVE

We recommend that maternity and parental leave benefits be increased to 95% of salary, up to maximum insurable earnings, and that the benefit period be extended to 41 weeks.