

VOTE FOR GOOD DAYCARE

ACTION DAY CARE believes that every child in Ontario has the right to quality day care - paid for by the government - and that Ontario needs a complete overhaul of its day care system. We are an organization of parents, day care workers and representatives from community organizations, women's organizations, trade unions and concerned individuals.

On March 19, Ontario residents will go to the polls to settle, among other issues, the future of day care for the next several years. The election also gives the day care community a chance to talk about the politics of day care at a time when people are more concerned than usual.

The care of children remains low on the list of government priorities. The day care community is plagued with a seemingly unending string of crises and problems. For example: extreme lack of subsidy spaces; fees so high that moderate income parents not qualifying for subsidy are effectively eliminated from quality care arrangements; the salaries of day care workers have been kept unreasonably low; and day care centres are burdened with an extremely complex bureaucratic structure in dealing with government.

How committed are our political parties to the provision of good quality and sufficient day care? Do you know where day care is on their list of political priorities? It is worth looking at party platforms and voting records to see how the political parties measure up to our aims.

THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The NDP day care policy was largely modelled on the one developed by Action Day Care. "The underlying principle of the NDP child care programme is the right of every child to universally accessible, affordable, high quality care. The NDP child care programme would provide community based care to children from infancy to age 12, and allow for a full range and mix of services, including group centres, private home care (linked with centres, where possible), part time care through group centres or drop in facilities, emergency care for sick children, night care and in-home care for children with special needs as part of the group centre programme. Child care funds would be directed only to government operated and to non-profit community controlled centres, and to registered home providers. Only a universal publicly funded system will ensure that quality child care is available to everyone who needs it, and that those who provide the care receive the pay and benefits they deserve."

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THE LIBERAL PARTY

While Liberal policy statements recognize some of the deficiencies in the present provision of day care services, they conclude with a list of recommendations most notable for its omissions. There is no suggestion of revisions of the subsidy system beyond the creation of more subsidized spaces, and no commitment to public funds. Also, there is no mention of the low salaries paid to day care workers. There is, however, explicit opposition to universal access: "it would be inappropriate at this time for day care to be established as a guaranteed right of all children."

THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The Conservative's policy - extracted from their record - should be sufficient to convince any day care supporter it is totally unacceptable. Over the past decade, the Conservatives have met an enormously growing need with cynical attempts to cut services and responded to protests with token concessions. Two steps backward for every step forward. Minister Keith Norton recently reaffirmed: "parents have the primary responsibility for the basic care of their children", and then develops principles and programmes making it clear the province will provide support only in the most desperate family circumstances. The Conservatives obviously do not recognize the difficulties faced by most working parents with small children when they insist that "The overwhelming majority of parents are perfectly able to make arrangements for their children's care". A vote for the Conservatives is a vote for the unacceptable status quo in the provision of day care for our children.

OTHER PARTIES' POLICIES

The Communist Party takes a position of universal free access to be funded by higher taxes on corporations. The Workers Communist Party supports universal free 24 hour care controlled by parents.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO DAY CARE

(a political discussion)

with:

MICHAEL CASSIDY, NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY

ANNE JOHNSON, LIBERAL PARTY

Spokespeople from the PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY,
the COMMUNIST PARTY & the WORKERS COMMUNIST PARTY

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 8 PM. INNIS COLLEGE

2 SUSSEX AVENUE (south of Bloor at St. George)