

Community Dispatch

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Canada Votes! – Child Care

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VOTES!

“Just one question...”

This publication is intended to help you engage with local candidates in the federal election on October 14, 2008. It's all about social issues that impact your community; questions that matter to you; and the role that the federal government can choose to take in addressing them.

Questions raise issues. Questions require candidates to develop a clear position on where they stand. In this document, we cover thirteen social issues affecting communities nationwide today, provide sample questions you can ask your candidates, and include links to more information. By getting involved, you help shape the kind of community in which you live – all it takes is just **one question**.

Child Care

Canadian families with children deserve to have access to high quality child care and early childhood education. Lack of child care spaces and high child care costs are putting many families in a desperate situation, especially in cases where the household is run by a single parent, or caregivers are balancing more than one job to make ends meet. A universal child care system should be a priority for the federal government. By

guaranteeing access to quality child care, the federal government can choose to help all children get a fair start by providing the foundations of life long learning, while also supporting parents in their efforts to seek and maintain employment.

The Conservative government introduced the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) in 2006. The UCCB provides all families with \$100 per month per child under the age of 6 years (before taxes). This federal benefit is provided to all families regardless of their income. While this benefit does assist in partially covering the cost of child care, it does nothing to address the shortage of child care spaces, especially quality child care.

In 2007, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit reported only 398,197 regulated child care spaces existed for children from 0 to 5 years in Canada. The report also showed that 2006 to 2007 had the smallest increase in the number of licensed child care spaces in many years. As the number of families with both parents working increases, it is likely more families will be seeking child care arrangements outside of the home. In 2005, 73% of mothers with children ages 3 to 5 years participated in the workforce, up from 68% in 1995.

While having more money in an individual family's pocket is nice, choosing to pool our resources in order to create a universal child care system allows access to quality child care for all families. The federal government can choose to listen to the voices that are calling for a publicly funded national child care system, developed in partnership with the provincial governments, and with input from Canadian families. We can choose to elect a

federal government that recognizes this need, and recognizes national child care as an opportunity to benefit the country.

For More Information:

Childcare Resource and Research Unit
www.childcarecanada.org

Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada
<http://ccaac.ca>

Code Blue for Child Care
www.buildchildcare.ca

Sources

Childcare Resource and Research Unit. 2007. *Child Care Space Statistics 2007*. <http://childcarecanada.org/pubs/other/spaces/index.html> (1 Sept. 2008)

Child Care: Key Points & Questions

Canadian families are struggling to find affordable, quality child care.

Even with decreasing numbers of children across the country, the number of full and part-time centre-based child care spaces only provides coverage for 19.3% of Canada's children under the age of six years.

How do you think the federal government can best improve access to quality child care for families with children?

Do you support a national publicly funded universal child care system?

Canada Votes Papers 2008 is a pan-Canadian collaboration between [SPARC BC](#), [Community Social Planning Council of Toronto](#), [Community Development Halton](#), [Human Development Council St. John](#), and [Canadian Council on Social Development](#). Social planning organizations across the country are helping to strengthen communities and work on social justice issues. We also recognize the need to work together around key issues affecting our communities. We have come together to provide this publication on the federal election because we believe that democracy works best when citizens engage in dialogue on important issues.

Canada Votes papers outline key social issues and related questions that are important in this election. Asking questions is a way to make sure these issues are on the public agenda. By reading this publication and passing it on, by asking questions and talking about the issues, and especially by voting on October 14, 2008, you can help shape the kind of community in which you want to live.

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You can download *Canada Votes* and find more interesting information online at www.cdhalton.ca



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