

POSITION STATEMENT

National Child Care in Canada

An initiative whose time has come



The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs
La Fédération Canadienne des Clubs de Femmes de Carrières Commerciales et Professionnelles

Darla D.W. Campbell, President
1382 Edgewater Road, Oakville, ON L6H 3C5

www.bpwcanada.com bpw@bpwcanada.com

Patron: Roberta Bondar, Ph.D., FRCP ©

*Working towards improving economic, political, social and employment
conditions for women.*

"Women working for working women."

March 31, 2005



National Child Care in Canada: An initiative whose time has come.

Position Statement

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs

March 31, 2005

BPW Canada applauds the decision of the Government of Canada to establish a national child care program as a high priority initiative, both to provide a much-needed service for working parents and to fill an important gap in Canada's framework of social programs, a deficiency highlighted in a recent report of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

It is clear to BPW Canada – as a national federation that represents nearly 50 clubs in communities across the country and that speaks for working women – that Canadians are very supportive and, in fact, quite excited and enthusiastic about this national initiative.

Fortunately, there is strong agreement among virtually all stakeholders on the QUAD principles of quality, universality, accessibility and development enrichment. The challenge will be in the interpretation and implementation of those principles.

BPW Canada appreciates that, in the words of Canadian Child Care Federation Executive Director Barbara Coyle, "This journey from a patchwork of services to early learning and child care systems is a leadership challenge for us all..." We share her insistence that, "While the funding must be flexible enough to accommodate different needs across jurisdictions, Canadians must know that this \$5-billion will be invested in developing early learning and child care systems based on previously agreed upon [QUAD] principles."

BPW Canada has carried out an in-depth review of the research on this very important issue, and has come to the following conclusions:

- 1) **There is a need for a sincere and serious negotiation effort.** All governments – federal, provincial and territorial - must make a sincere and wholehearted effort to work together. Childcare must not become another political football. BPW Canada wants a national childcare program, not a litany of excuses for its continued delay. Canadians have already waited too long.
- 2) **The program design must include a framework for full, transparent and rigorous accountability.** While we believe that all parties will subscribe to the QUAD principles, other aspects of the program may be more difficult to negotiate. From the outset, the program must be designed to allow for monitoring to ensure compliance. It must be subject to systematic review to ensure that program goals and objectives are attained.
- 3) **The program must be designed with an objective of long-term feasibility and sustainability.** Canadians do not want a childcare program that is subject to the whims of this or any future government. They want a program that is an integral part of Canada's social program network. BPW Canada, like all Canadians, wants a childcare program for the long-term. On these points, we endorse the recommendations of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.¹
- 4) **A national childcare program must address the issue of salary and working conditions for those working in the system.** For too long, childcare providers have been undervalued



National Child Care in Canada: An initiative whose time has come.
Position Statement

for the services they provide and the personal and professional qualifications expected of them. Many of BPW Canada's members have been and are childcare providers, and we believe that it is critical that human resource issues be addressed, as a national childcare program is developed. *There is no job more important than the job of caring for our young people – our citizens of tomorrow.* In this regard, we are particularly interested in the recommendations of the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.²

5) **Rural and remote communities have different childcare needs and requirements.** Many BPW Canada clubs are located in rural, remote and small communities. We are sensitive to the needs addressed in the position paper "National Child Care Strategy for Rural, Remote and Northern Communities," developed by Rural Voices for Early Learning and Care in February of 2005. We specifically agree with the following statement, found in this document: "Rural, remote and northern communities are a kaleidoscope of diversity that includes changing demographics, non-standard employment patterns, large geographic distances, cultural and linguistic differences, and service delivery challenges...It is unlikely that one service model will respond to the needs of all communities, especially rural-based communities." Much research has been done on childcare needs in rural and remote communities, and almost all of it concludes that a "one-size-fits-all" approach will not work.

6) **We do not believe that Canada's national childcare program should exclude the private sector.** The private sector has for many years provided needed service where government has failed to do so. If only as a matter of fairness, they should not now be excluded. A national childcare program should allow for the inclusion of independent childcare providers, both private sector and non-profit organizations. Our present "system" includes established programs of both kinds. BPW Canada recognizes that the early childhood education field has historically created business opportunities for women who, for years, have developed successful childcare businesses. Our membership includes many of these entrepreneurs, who attest to the importance of this avenue of employment and career development. It goes without saying that all childcare operations should be subject to the same standards and be properly licensed, regulated and monitored.

In conclusion, BPW Canada again commends the federal government on this important initiative. As an organization, we are prepared to assist in any way possible, to ensure that this national childcare program meets the needs of Canadians, today and in the future.

ENDNOTES

¹ The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada recommends the following:

- A publicly funded, sustainable system;
- A Child Care Act that guarantees standards and principles;
- Public accountability tied to concrete provincial and territorial plans. Programs and staff must be monitored to ensure they continue to meet the QUAD principles.

² The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council recommends the following:

- A general policy framework that clearly recognizes the central role of child care to early childhood development strategies;
- Coherent public policies across the sector to effectively manage the demand for child care and early childhood educators;



- Sufficient funding of the sector;
- Labour market information to guide decision making:
 1. Promote increased pay and benefits;
 2. Develop a recruitment strategy;
 3. Develop a retention strategy;
 4. Enhance management and leadership practices and supports;
 5. Increase attachment to professional, labour and advocacy organizations;
 6. Develop partnerships with the education and research community, government departments and related sectors;
 7. Reframe the "child care" versus "early childhood development" dialogue;
 8. Develop a research agenda.

REFERENCES

- Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. www.adco-o.on.ca
- Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada -in person interview with Maryann Bird Executive Director January 28 2005 and the website www.childcareadvocacy.ca
- Canadian Child Care Federation - in person interview with Barbara Coyle, Executive Director, February 9 2005. www.cccf-fcsge.ca
- Child Care Human Resources Sector Council - Labour Market Update Study - "Working for Change: Canada's Child Care Workforce," 2004. www.ccsc-cssge.ca/
- Canadian Child Care Management Association.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *Babies and Bosses: OECD Recommendations to Help Families Balance Work and Family Life.* October 2004. www.oecd.org
- Prime Minister's Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs. *Report and Recommendations.* October 2003.
- "Rural Childcare – We're worth it: Strategic Directions for moving ahead on a national childcare strategy for rural, remote and northern communities. Discussion paper." Prepared by Rural Voices for Early Learning and Care and the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, February 2005.
- "Stand on Guard for Child Care." *Globe & Mail*, February 4, 2005.
- "Speak up Women." *Ottawa Citizen*, January 31, 2005.



ATTACHMENT A: Published Letter to the Editor

The Toronto Star – October 28, 2004

Letter to the Editor

The homework's already done

RE: Child care report hailed – Oct 26

While we continue to study the issues and impacts of effective child care, the leaders of the future are growing up with a second-rate start to their education. Is that fair to the future economy of Canada?

When will the leaders of today stop studying and start implementing a national world-class child care program for our children under the age of 6? Our federal government has a golden opportunity to do the right thing, right now. Following the golden rule shouldn't be that difficult. The OECD has done the homework for us.

Darla D.W. Campbell

BPW Canada – National President
Business and Professional Women Canada

Attachment B: BPW Canada Resolutions on Child Care (Daycare)

NOTE: CFBPWC is The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, also known as BPW Canada

Index Ref: 300.10. page 48 RESOLUTION 90/09

WOMEN IN THE WORK PLACE

THAT CFBPWC urge the Government of Canada to:

1. Ensure financial institutions make credit available to women on the same basis as to men to start their own businesses;
2. Develop adequate social support systems for working women including maternal health care and *provision of child care* during working hours; and
3. Develop economic strategies which provide incentive to women to begin their own business ventures.



Index Ref: 600.10. page 107 RESOLUTION 90/16

QUALIFIED DAY CARE EDUCATORS

THAT CFBPWC urge the Federal Government to encourage Provincial Governments to institute uniform personal suitability selection processes prior to training potential Child Care Educators and Child Care providers with standardized admission requirements, psychological testing and criminal record searches.

Index Ref: 600.10. page 115 RESOLUTION 94/05

DAY CARE FACILITIES "IN HOUSE" & TAX INCENTIVES

THAT the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs urge the Government of Canada to establish a pro-active program of tax incentives to private sector businesses willing to establish "in house" Day Care facilities for their employees on a cost sharing basis between government, employer and employee.

THAT this program encourage the joining together of groups of businesses to establish cooperative Day Cares.

Index Ref: 600.10. page 115 RESOLUTION 94/30

DAY CARE LEGISLATION

THAT the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs urge the Government of Canada to work with the Provincial Governments:

- a) Develop, implement and enforce legislation and standards that apply to all child care centres in every province and territory.
 - b) Develop and implement national standards for early childhood educators, assistants and all other paid child care workers, while ensuring equity in the implementation of national standards.
- THAT the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs urge the Provincial Organizations to urge their Provincial Governments to:
- c) Establish and fund day care centres within high schools or adjacent educational institutions so that student mothers can complete their education, enhance their opportunities for employment, and reduce the possibility of future reliance on social services.
 - d) Examine existing facilities (i.e. schools and public institutions) in the provinces/territories with space that could be made available for the establishment of child care centres for school age children to be supported by public dollars.

Index Ref: 600.50. page 156 RESOLUTION 94/22

DAY CARE EXPENSES

THAT the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs reaffirms Resolution 74/31 (further re-affirmed in 1988-25) which urges the Government of Canada to amend the Income Tax Act to allow the actual costs incurred for day care to be claimed as an expense rather than the present maximum deduction.



National Child Care in Canada: An initiative whose time has come.
Position Statement

For further information, please contact

Darla D.W. Campbell, President
BPW Canada
1382 Edgewise Road
Oakville, ON L6H 3C5

P 905-845-9760
F 905-845-9406
e-mail: darla.dw.campbell@sympatico.ca

www.bpwcanada.com

bpw@bpwcanada.com