Wanted: A Child Care Policy for Canadians

January 3, 2003 – A child care policy for Canadians has been on the agenda since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women issued its call for a national child care policy framework in 1970. Most recently, the interim report of the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues recommended that all orders of government work together to ensure that all Canadian children have access to quality child care and early education.

Public support for the development of accessible, good quality early childhood care is justified on many grounds:

- as indispensable to gender equality,
- as part of the right of all children to secure a good start in life,
- as a contribution to reconciling work and family life, and
- as crucial to the social infrastructure of the emerging knowledge-based economy.

Activists and an interdisciplinary chorus of experts have documented the need and the multiple benefits of such a system. Still, decades of effort have achieved only a patchwork of programs that inadequately serve the majority of Canada's children.

Last October, CPRN's Family Network, collaborated with Research Associate, Rianne Mahon of the Institute of Political Economy at Carleton University on a one-day conference to explore the failure to establish a child care policy framework across Canada.

Conference participants came from all over the country and included students and professors; policy researchers; federal, provincial and municipal government officials; and child care advocates and providers.

In the morning, presentations focused on national child care policies in Europe and Japan. The afternoon session considered North American child care policies, with presentations on Canada, Quebec, Manitoba, and the United States.

Final Report: Child Care Policy Conference, is a report on the conference by Jane Jenson, Director of CPRN's Family Network. It provides a brief overview of the major themes that emerged, along with abstracts of each of the presentations.

You can access or download a copy by clicking here.

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