



**Child Care Advocacy
Association of Canada**

**L'Association canadienne
pour la promotion des services de garde à l'enfance**



An open letter to Canada's parliamentarians

Dear Honourable Members of Parliament,

A little over a week ago, a major study was released containing evidence that investing in the child care sector is the biggest job creator and provides one of the highest GDP impacts of all major sectors in Canada (\$2.30 of economic output for every dollar that goes to programs). These are striking findings at a time of massive job losses and economic uncertainty.

The study, *Understanding and Addressing Workforce Shortages in Early Childhood Education and Care*, was conducted by respected economist Robert Fairholm of the Centre for Spatial Economics in Toronto. It primarily analyzes workforce shortages in child care in Canada, and estimates the social and economic impact of the sector.

Here is another compelling finding: Every dollar invested in the child care sector would virtually pay for itself right away—it would generate an estimated 90 cents back in revenue for the federal and provincial governments, with the federal government gaining the most.

The study adds to the tremendous body of longstanding research and experience on the social and economic benefits of child care. At this point we must ask: What more is needed to convince the federal government to take a leadership role in building a system of high quality early childhood education and care services across Canada?

Canadian governments have invested considerable dollars in infrastructure and construction this past year, and mostly ignored the critical need to invest in our *social* infrastructure. The situation in the child care sector has reached crisis proportions: the Conservatives have dramatically reduced spending to about \$600 million a year, down from \$950 million in 2006.

The study found that recent workforce shortages of trained and qualified child care workers cost the economy at least \$141 million. An investment of \$1 million in the sector would create almost 40 jobs in the economy—at least 40% higher than the next closest industry, and four times the jobs generated by \$1 million in construction activity.

The direct and indirect job creation and economic stimulus of child care investment is a big bonus on top of the considerable contribution the sector makes to the well being of children, and the support it provides to parents to balance work, training or study with their family responsibilities.

If Prime Minister Harper wants to fix Canada's economy and make Canada's children and families a priority, he should look closely at this study. We urge you to do so as well, and to press the government to provide policy and funding leadership so that all parents who want to will soon be able to access and afford high quality early childhood education and care services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jody Dallaire".

Jody Dallaire
Chairperson