



Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada  
Association canadienne pour la promotion des services de garde à l'enfance

The Honourable Kelly Regan  
Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act  
Quinpool Centre, 2nd floor, Suite 202  
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November 6, 2017

Dear Minister Regan,

The Child Care Advocacy Association has been Canada's umbrella child care advocacy organization since the 1980s. We speak on behalf of our individual and group members, and the hundreds of thousands of women, parents, educators, workers, academics and social policy experts from across the country who are committed to quality, affordable child care for all Canadians.

While access to quality child care is an issue for children, the economy and for Canadian society as a whole, it is unquestionably fundamental and central to women's equality. Indeed, "child care is the ramp that provides equal access to the workforce for mothers<sup>1</sup>". It is for this reason we are writing to you and all the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women in advance of your 2017 meeting later this week.

We are extremely concerned that, despite recent and significant efforts by federal, provincial and territorial governments, the crisis in child care is deepening with damaging and far-reaching consequences for women's economic security and for gender equality generally. Internationally, Canada continues to be identified as being far behind other similarly developed countries with respect to child care by such groups as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. Without significant government action, this will not change.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women is now concluding a study on the economic security of women in Canada. Numerous expert witnesses gave evidence of the negative impact of the lack of licensed, affordable, inclusive, high-quality child care, and also of the positive impact that proper public spending, guided by robust public child care policy, would have on gender equality as well as on the development and well-being of children and on economic growth. These perspectives are well supported in research in Canada and internationally.

The bilateral child care funding agreements that are now being negotiated further to the June 2017 Early Learning and Child Care Framework will go some way in addressing some gaps in the child care situation. However, we are most concerned that thus far, both policy and funds are too limited by far to make the systemic change that is needed. What is needed is transformative change in child care—

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<sup>1</sup>Royal Commission on Equality in Employment, 1984.

change that has as one main objective the access for all families that is needed to support gender equality and women's economic security.

As child care is such a fundamental issue for women, we are counting on the federal/provincial/territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women to actively engage in the child care file to make sure that this objective can be achieved.

As a start, we urge the following:

- Make child care a regular standing agenda item on the agendas of your federal/provincial/territorial meetings, and on those of your officials;
- Regularly meet, discuss and work with the civil society groups working on child care--the CCAAC and our national and provincial/territorial child care partners--to ensure that the development of child care policies, including funding policies, are based on the best evidence and the on-the-ground experience of the women who work in child care services (98% of the child care workforce) and of mothers, who continue to suffer disproportionately from the way child care is now organized and funded;
- Federally, consider holding hearings at the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (and equivalent hearings provincially and territorially) to learn more about women's child care needs as a key component of women's equality across Canada;
- Find ways to help child care organizations build their organizational capacity so that we can do an even better job developing research, citizenship engagement and popular education, so that we in turn can do a better job of working with you to advance the status of women.

We urge you to use the opportunity of this annual meeting to begin this significant engagement of your group of women's ministers with the issue of child care. We and our partners in the provinces/territories would be most pleased to meet with you individually or collectively to discuss any and all possibilities.

Thank you for your attention. We look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

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