

## Must We Choose Between Today's Economy and Tomorrow's Teenagers? Part 1

**Peter Vogal**

Deputy Leader, CHP Canada

Do you think that separating young children from their families for more than eight hours a day is a good idea for the well-being of the children and their parents?

While the answer to this question may vary depending on experience—some children come from abusive homes, and some parents are in need of learning basic child-rearing skills—the majority of parents—because of their unique family relationship and bonding—can provide better individual care and nurture for their children than group care in a state-funded daycare facility. Again, some factors and outcomes are almost impossible to measure, but a 2010 study from Manitoba concluded that:

The number of working mothers is rising in Canada and families are requiring non-parental care for their children. This study essentially found that centre based and family based child care are associated with better literacy and academic skills. It also showed that children who were in non-parental care at any point had higher scores of aggressive behaviour than those in parental care<sup>1</sup>.

So there are results for children, some of them negative; and what about parents? According to a recent article by the *Daily Mail*, the number one regret (on a list of 20) that parents have with regard to raising their children is – working too much!<sup>2</sup> The other regrets also related to lack of time spent with their children.

The debate over government-provided daycare vs. income splitting is starting to heat up in Canada. This is good because Canadians need to talk about how important child care is. The danger is that Canadians may be pushed into a bad program if they are not given all the facts. While a national day-care plan has been tried before (but has never quite gotten off the ground), there are signs that the demand for it is growing.<sup>3</sup> The most notable one is Quebec's province-wide daycare program. This program is said to put \$1.75 back into the economy for every dollar invested by government.<sup>4</sup> At first glance, Thomas Mulcair and the NDP seem to be right on target with their announcement last Tuesday of a national childcare strategy that would cost parents a maximum of \$15 dollars a day – it would be great for the economy!

Will the program work? Maybe we should look at Quebec's experience before jumping into this nationally; John Ivison of the *National Post* recently wrote:

The Quebec Government has made it clear that it can no longer afford to subsidize the province's \$7-a-day daycare – a program that costs \$2.7-billion for 223,000 spaces. The options open to Philippe Couillard's government range from axing the program entirely to introducing a new pricing structure that could be adjusted to reflect parental income.

But that was before Captain Quebec burst onto the scene. Mr. Mulcair said the NDP plan will build on the Quebec model – the one that is now deemed unaffordable.<sup>5</sup>

Hmmm, isn't that like seeing a ship sinking, copying the design, building one like it, and launching again, but this time with more people on board? Maybe this will not be as good for the economy as Mr. Mulcair thinks. It might be good to remember that the NDP is also pro-union, so it would not be a stretch to think about a child-care-worker's union beginning soon, and their wages rising accordingly under threats of inconvenient strikes every few years. Regulation would also quietly eat away at public revenues because inspectors would also have to be paid.

No, the NDP's plan would not be good for the economy, but more importantly, it would not be good for the kids.

We'll look at the Conservative answer to the NDP plan next week.

The Christian Heritage Party has the only plan that provides parents with the preferred option of raising their own children.<sup>6</sup> We will look at the CHP's proposed Family Care Allowance in more detail next week.

If you are not a member of the Christian Heritage Party join today.<sup>7</sup> If you are a member, let's get busy and promote CHP Canada's Better Solutions.

## **Call To Action**

- Change the conversation!
- Talk about what is best for the child's future, not just the economy
- Talk to your MP about income-splitting and CHP's child-friendly family-care allowance.

## **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/ecd/ecd\\_npceffects.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/ecd/ecd_npceffects.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2203025/Spending-time-work-children-young-parents-chief-regret.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2203025/Spending-time-work-children-young-parents-chief-regret.html)

<sup>3</sup> [www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/10/15/liberals\\_shoot\\_blanks\\_while\\_tories\\_ndp\\_hit\\_targets\\_hbert.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/10/15/liberals_shoot_blanks_while_tories_ndp_hit_targets_hbert.html)

<sup>4</sup> [www.ndp.ca/news/mulcair-draws-his-experience-to-launch-affordable-childcare-plan](http://www.ndp.ca/news/mulcair-draws-his-experience-to-launch-affordable-childcare-plan)

<sup>5</sup> [fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/10/14/john-ivison-ndps-plan-to-save-quebec-daycare-is-as-palatable-as-a-campaign-to-kill-the-canadian-beaver/](http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2014/10/14/john-ivison-ndps-plan-to-save-quebec-daycare-is-as-palatable-as-a-campaign-to-kill-the-canadian-beaver/)

<sup>6</sup> [www.chp.ca/platform/category/life-family/family-care](http://www.chp.ca/platform/category/life-family/family-care)

<sup>7</sup> [www.chp.ca/get-involved](http://www.chp.ca/get-involved)