

ECDA sent all party candidates an email on August 30, 2021 asking them to answer 3 important questions regarding their plans to support early learning and child care on Prince Edward Island. If you are voting in advanced polls or waiting until election day on the 20th, please read the 5 responses received that directly affect your profession and families.



Heath MacDonald - Liberal Candidate for Malpeque

Question 1: With 8 of the provinces/territories to date agreeing to Early Learning and Child Care system building, what is your party's plan/commitment to honouring and continuing this essential work?

As the Liberal Party of Canada in Malpeque, I am completely in support of honouring the \$10/Day childcare plan that was previously announced between the province of PEI and the Federal Liberal Government. On the doors I am hearing many young families describe this initiative as "life-changing". The fact of the matter is, all families and all children deserve the best possible start in life, and this can only be accomplished by leveling the playing field for everyone. I promise that if elected, I will continue to champion and advocate for the Liberal Party's plan for \$10/Day Childcare for everyone.

This plan will start by cutting fees by 50% within the first year and will end with a \$10/day universal fee within the next 5 years. This will be done with an investment of up to \$30 Billion over the next 5 years, with an additional investment of \$9.2 Billion every year ongoing to ensure a truly nationwide childcare program.

Question 2: Canadian parents have long struggled to find affordable, high quality child care spaces. To support parents and their economic security, how will you be expanding and enhancing child care spaces?

I know first hand how difficult it can be to find high-quality childcare spaces. That is why the Liberal Party of Canada childcare plan has committed to creating 125,000 new, regulated, childcare spaces over the next five years. These spaces will be on top of the 40,000 spaces that have been created by the Liberal government since 2015. Additionally, through an investment of \$29.2 Million in the Enabling Accessibility Fund, a re-elected Liberal Government will improve accessible spaces at over 400 Early Years Centres. As well, the Liberal plan will invest \$2.5 billion over the next five years in Indigenous early learning and child care. This investment will provide high-quality, culturally-appropriate early learning and child care, designed by and with Indigenous partners and communities to meet the needs of Indigenous families wherever they live, help deliver more flexible and full-time hours of care, build, train and retain a skilled workforce, and create up to 3,300 new spaces.

Question 3: The work of Early Childhood Educators in Canada's ELCC sector is essential. Does your plan make an ongoing commitment to value and support the ECE profession and our work with such things as increased wages, support for education and training and recruitment and retention of ECEs?

I understand just how important the work of Early Childhood Educators is, and I am excited by the Liberal Party's commitment to ensuring they have the proper supports and opportunities they need to continue to deliver exceptional care. The Liberal plan will work with provinces to ensure the system is accountable to Canadians with publicly available data to measure progress and help continuously improve the system, for students and staff alike. As well, a re-elected Liberal Government will ensure that early childhood educators – over 95 per cent of whom are women – benefit from greater opportunities for professional development and from the development of tools like wage grids to better value their work. From my time in provincial politics, I understand the need to ensure that ECE's are well compensated for the work that they do, and I remain committed to working with all provincial counter parts to continue to advocate for increased wages and benefits for ECE's should I be elected to represent the riding of Malpeque on election day.

Sean Casey - Liberal Candidate for Charlottetown

Question 1: With 8 of the provinces/territories to date agreeing to Early Learning and Child Care system building, what is your party's plan/commitment to honouring and continuing this essential work?

The fact is, ensuring families have access to early learning and child care is not just a social issue—it is an urgent economic issue. The pandemic has exposed what parents have long known. Without access to affordable child care, parents, mostly mothers, can't work. This is a universal issue that is resonating across sectors, regions, and income brackets. Building a publicly funded Canada-wide system of accessible, high-quality early learning and child care will not only support working parents and make life more affordable for families, but it will also create jobs, strengthen our economy, grow the middle class, and give every child in Canada the best possible start in life. Affordable, high-quality child care has the potential to add 240,000 workers to the Canadian workforce. Every dollar invested in early childhood education can generate up to \$3 in economic return.

16 years ago, the Paul Martin Liberals had a universal child care in hand which the incoming Harper Conservatives scrapped following the 2006 election. Once again, a federal Liberal government has delivered an affordable child care plan for Canadians. The Conservatives have clearly stated that if elected, they will follow Stephen Harper's suit from 2006 and scrap this important initiative. The Conservatives have tried to suggest that they are going to take the same savings to family's and put them directly back into the pockets of Canadians. The costing of their platform shows different, however (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/conservatives-platform-costs-otoole-1.6168097>). Where the Liberals will reduce child care costs by an average of 50% for jurisdictions that have signed agreements by next year, and to \$10/day in five years. Just \$3.6 billion of the \$60 billion the Conservatives have promised to invest will come between now and 2025-2026.

The short answer to the question is that the Liberal Party plans on finishing what we started.

Question 2: Canadian parents have long struggled to find affordable, high quality child care spaces. To support parents and their economic security, how will you be expanding and enhancing child care spaces?

The Liberal Plan will work with provinces and territories to increase quality spaces across the country. Existing agreements in place provide for more than 125,000 new spaces. We will continue to work on remaining agreements and will build 250,000 new high-quality child care spaces country wide over the next 5 years.

Question 3: The work of Early Childhood Educators in Canada's ELCC sector is essential. Does your plan make an ongoing commitment to value and support the ECE profession and our work with such things as increased wages, support for education and training and recruitment and retention of ECEs?

We will hire 40,000 more early childhood educators. Ensuring that early childhood educators – over 95 per cent of whom are women – benefit from greater opportunities for professional development and from the development of tools like wage grids to better value their work.

Anna Keenan, Green Party Candidate for Malpeque

Question 1: With 8 of the provinces/territories to date agreeing to Early Learning and Child Care system building, what is your party's plan/commitment to honouring and continuing this essential work?

The Green Party is fully committed to the principle of universal, affordable childcare. It's good for children, parents - especially mothers - families, our society, and the economy. And it has been part of our election platforms for decades. We are very glad to see that the older parties are finally picking up the concept. Should I be elected, I would hold them accountable for implementation.

Of course, the Green party is unlikely to form a unilateral majority government this election. Rather, we will have a few seats, hopefully in the balance of power, in a minority government. If I am elected, I will make implementation of the \$10/day childcare promise part of my conditions for support in a minority government.

Question 2: Canadian parents have long struggled to find affordable, high quality child care spaces. To support parents and their economic security, how will you be expanding and enhancing child care spaces?

From the Green Party Platform on Universal child care, a Green government would:

1. Dedicate additional resources to making a universal, affordable, early learning and child-care (ELCC) system a reality
 - Collaborate with provinces/territories, local communities, Indigenous communities and the child-care sector to ensure that a comprehensive short-, medium- and long-term policy road map – based on the principles of universality, affordability, quality, inclusivity, accessibility, and equity – finally becomes a reality.
 - These principles will ensure a right of access for all children regardless of their parents' work status or income levels, while at the same time allowing for regional and local adaptation.
2. Improve and strengthen parental leave
 - Make parental leave more inclusive so it covers leave to care for elderly family members, leave following miscarriages and more, and more flexible and better paid.
3. Increase federal child care funding
 - Immediately begin to ramp up federal child care funding to achieve the international benchmark of at least one per cent of GDP annually.
 - Long-term, stable, national funding must be made available and be sufficient to meet the standards of the guiding principles. It must also be secure and predictable enough to permit the long-term planning and sustainability of the programs.
 - Ensure the training, recruitment and retention of well-paid and professional staff.
4. Eliminate GST on all construction costs related to child care spaces
5. Ensure equitable access to high-quality, culturally appropriate ELCC programmes for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children
 - Build on the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care and the accompanying bilateral agreements that have been negotiated with every province and territory, as well as with the First Nation, Inuit and Métis Peoples to ensure solutions are meeting their needs.

Question 3: The work of Early Childhood Educators in Canada's ELCC sector is essential. Does your plan make an ongoing commitment to value and support the ECE profession and our work with such things as increased wages, support for education and training and recruitment and retention of ECEs?

Childcare access is a particular problem in the rural areas of my riding, and I know that a major part of the reason is that ECE staff are in short supply on PEI. For example, in Kensington they've just expanded their childcare centre to add physical space for another 50 children, but can only find staff to support an additional 25 spots.

I believe that if we compensated ECE workers more generously, we could attract many more to the rewarding profession. Sadly, it is currently undervalued, like many caregiving professions.

In the past I have supported the provincial campaigns to increase wages for ECE workers, and, like the provincial Greens, will continue to support this should I be elected.

Alex Clark, Green Candidate for Egmont

Question 1: With 8 of the provinces/territories to date agreeing to Early Learning and Child Care system building, what is your party's plan/commitment to honouring and continuing this essential work?

The vital importance of child care in our communities has been at time undervalued and it's certainly a place of need in our system. My wife and I have a 20 month old and we have not tried to enter the childcare realm yet with him, our concerns and thoughts about childcare are likely similar to the average family looking but my commitment if elected is certainly in support of further growth, development, and improvement for the childcare systems for the child/parents and the people working hard to care and administer these programs. I feel there's a work shortage that the childcare industry is facing that will inevitably pressure the system to painful ends. I've been committed to innovated ways to make sure people are living and working in our communities and that includes childcare providers. I am a supporter of more mentorship and work development being done within our school system to allow students to see the opportunities of working in fields of need within our communities. When I went to school they told us all to move away and work in the oil fields, this has proven bad for our local economy with a mass exodus of our youth and individuals that could be childcare workers. It's a novel idea from other parties to promise large amounts of money to areas like childcare, which I will not deny could use more federal financial support and I do like the idea of the \$10 childcare, but I feel we need a combination of innovation and supports. The Government has a terrible track record of administering funds to community groups without controversy and a plan to make sure the people and groups that truly need that funds see that. With the \$10 childcare I want to advocate to make sure systems like this are as simple as possible to access and receive subsidies from for the providers. In building and developing these programs I want to work hard to make sure the users and providers are able to access them with ease and quick support if needed.

Question 2: Canadian parents have long struggled to find affordable, high quality child care spaces. To support parents and their economic security, how will you be expanding and enhancing child care spaces?

Childcare businesses are small businesses just like so many other small businesses they need access to good staff to allow for growth. Introducing more job fair integration to our school will introduce these opportunities to our youth and hopefully encourage people to live and work here in this industry. We need to present the opportunities to entrepreneurs to create and build more and more diverse childcare spaces in our region, this starts with our schools, but it can be encouraged by loan programs and simplified access to funding for people looking to start these type of community based small businesses. As a small business owner and can share easily that accessing government programs is often next to impossible, this roadblock to entering the business world hurts all sectors including childcare.

Question 3: The work of Early Childhood Educators in Canada’s ELCC sector is essential. Does your plan make an ongoing commitment to value and support the ECE profession and our work with such things as increased wages, support for education and training and recruitment and retention of ECEs?

The importance of early childhood development has been shamefully neglected by previous governments in recognizing the need for better pay and supports to those working in this field. I am in full support of reworking and reimagining our childcare system by working with the stakeholders in the system and making sure its a great place to work for them and a place that will encourage others to join this field of work. Politicians blanket ideas to fix things often neglects the voices of the people actually facing the issues everyday, I promise to never stand on a podium and pretend I know more about something then the person that works in it everyday. My ongoing support if elected would be also in continued conversation with the hope that we can react to issues quickly together rather then waiting for them hitting a breaking point.

Doug Currie, Conservative Party of Canada Candidate for Charlottetown

To ensure a prosperous future for Canadians, we need to ensure our hard-working families are supported.

Canada’s Conservatives will support working families with children by providing increased funding for child-care. We will do this by converting the Child Care Expense deduction into a refundable tax credit covering up to 75% of the cost of childcare for lower income families. This will increase the support that lower income families receive by thousands of dollars per year and provide more assistance to families.

In order to make this as convenient as possible for families, we will pay out the deduction over the course of the year so that families do not have to pay the cost of childcare and have to wait to get their money back at tax time.

Our flexible and comprehensive approach will help all families right away and offer extra support to those who need it most. Under our plan the most significant benefit will go to families with income under \$50,000. Here’s a few examples of how families will benefit:

Family Income	Current Max Claim Amount	Conservative Plan
\$30,000	\$1,200	\$6,000
\$50,000	\$1,200	\$5,200
\$80,000	\$1,200	\$4,800
\$120,000	\$1,640	\$4,560

To be clear, a family with an income of \$30,000 can today claim a maximum of \$1,200. Under our plan they will receive up to \$6,000.

Our party believes that no one should be prevented from getting back to work because they cannot afford child-care. The recession has hit women the hardest and set back the full integration of women in Canada’s workforce. Allowing women to reach true equality in the workforce is impossible without increased childcare funding. It is why our plan emphasizes flexibility for parents, in contrast to the Liberal, one size fits all approach, that will shut out anyone who does not fit their model.

We want to ensure that working parents are supported during all stages of raising children, which is why Canada’s Conservatives will also expand the Canada Child Benefit by allowing benefits to begin at the 7th month of pregnancy rather than at childbirth.

Additional statement by Doug Currie, Conservative Party Candidate for Charlottetown:

If successful in becoming the MP, I am committed to working with the ECDA to continue the work I led as the former Minister responsible for early childhood education in our province. I will work with the province to continue to expand seats, advance more Early Years Centres, enhance wages and work with post secondary education to implement more innovative and creative training opportunities for early childhood educators. I am passionate about the sector and am confident I can work with our provincial leadership to continue to lead our province in being the model of excellence I built while a provincial Cabinet Minister.

JoeAnne Callaghan - On behalf of NDP

After decades of Conservative and Liberal inaction, the NDP will finally establish a universal child care. New Democrats will create a \$10 a day, universal child care system.

- We will maintain current child care agreements and work with provinces/territories that have yet to sign agreements
- We will prioritize funding for regulated, public and non-profit child care centres.
- We will restore funding for child care centres that were forced to close during the pandemic because of financial challenges as well as child care centres in federal buildings.
- We will ensure that child care workers are paid a fair wage and provide training supports to support retention of workers in the sector.
- We will introduce legislation to enshrine our commitment by establishing the core principles of a universal child care program.

Our Key Messages:

- Erin O'Toole and the Conservatives don't have a plan for child care. They rejected universal child care and, instead, are offering a plan that does nothing to reduce wait lists or create new child care spaces.
 - Families already know that a child care system based on tax credits drives up costs and helps people who can already afford expensive child care options.
 - Justin Trudeau and the Liberals have been promising universal child care for decades. They could have taken action for families a long time ago but didn't. Like their promises on pharmacare, paid sick leave, and housing,
 - Justin Trudeau drags his feet and then recycles the same promises when it's time for an election.
- Canadians cannot afford to wait any longer. They want high quality child care that doesn't force them to choose between having a family or having a career.
- New Democrats know that child care is the smartest investment we can make in our future and our economy.
 - Our plan stands up for families so that they no longer need to struggle to find quality, affordable child care close to home without having to break the bank.