

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Failure to address child care crisis in 2018 budget keeps the brakes on gender equality**

OTTAWA, FEBRUARY 27, 2018 – The 2018 federal budget has blocked gender equality by failing to increase spending on early learning and child care, says Canada’s national child care advocacy group.

“We are astounded that Finance Minister Bill Morneau has chosen to ignore the solid evidence that lack of access to affordable child care is the biggest barrier to women’s equal participation in the paid labour force,” said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now (formerly the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada).

Child Care Now had called for a federal allocation to early learning and child care of \$1 billion for 2018-19, including the money already allocated in the 2017 budget.

“The 2017 federal budget gave \$540 million for child care in 2018-2019, and that amount will rise to only \$550 million by 2021-2022,” said Ballantyne. “It is half what the previous Liberal government allocated more than ten years ago and nowhere near close to enough to address the high cost of child care and the serious shortage of licensed spaces in the short, medium or long term.”

Ballantyne said an immediate influx of federal funds is required, combined with a much stronger federal hand in child care policy, to ensure that the gaps in quality, affordability and access found in all regions are reduced, and that inequities between regions, social classes and women and men are not widened.

“The federal government must assume responsibility, and budget sufficiently, to ensure all children and parents have access to affordable, high quality and inclusive child care programs regardless of where they happen to live,” she said. “otherwise women’s equality will never become a reality in Canada,” she added.

Ballantyne said she was pleased the budget included a new Employment Insurance benefit aimed primarily at encouraging fathers to take leave after the birth or adoption of a child.



“The experience from Quebec and elsewhere tells us that this “use it or lose it” benefit will result in more fathers taking leave and will contribute to a more equal sharing of care in the home, both in the short and long-term,” explained Ballantyne.

“However, improvements in leave for fathers and other second parents, while very important and welcome, are not a substitute for child care.” she said.

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**About Child Care Now**

Child Care Now (formerly Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada) is dedicated to advocating for a publicly funded, inclusive, quality, non-profit child care system. Our organization is non-profit, membership-based and regionally representative.

