



NEW BRUNSWICK
CHILD CARE COALITION

COALITION DES SERVICES
DE GARDE À L'ENFANCE
DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK

Bi-Annual Report

2007-2009

ACTIVITIES IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Since our last general meeting in November 2007, a lot has happened as it relates to child care in New Brunswick. Our work has focussed mostly on building and deepening partnerships with other women's and social justice organizations and raising political and public awareness about what is good child care public policy and investment.

The year 2007 saw the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition become an incorporated non-profit organization. In 2007, the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition received some funding from the provincial government to hire a consulting firm "Corporate Research Associates," to conduct focus groups with parents in various communities throughout the province. These focus groups provided valuable input on parents' perceptions of child care and what they identify as their needs. The Coalition also organized a number of public events throughout the province to make information on child care policy more accessible to New Brunswickers. The Coalition compiled their feedback into a report format that was forwarded to the provincial government. Finally, this process saw the Coalition receive and compile briefs submitted by individuals and organizations throughout the province.

The Coalition also engaged child care providers in a public policy discussion. The provincial government announced that it would be implementing pay equity practices for child care workers in New Brunswick. The Coalition organized, in collaboration with the Coalition for Pay Equity and the NB Advisory Council on the Status of Women, three lunch and learn events about pay equity for child care workers. The information sessions took place in Moncton, Fredericton and Saint John. Martha Friendly, a child care expert, came to share the Ontario experience with pay equity to child care workers. She outlined how pay equity could increase their salary for the work that they do. Approximately 200 early childhood educators attended these sessions.

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New Brunswick Child Care Coalition

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The year 2008 was also characterized by a flutter of activity.

In 2008, the Coalition was the recipient of the Barbara Roberts Memorial Fund given by Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. The \$2,000 award went towards Coalition's project of documenting how other jurisdictions moved child care policy from being seen as a private commodity to a public good. A summer student was hired and completed the research on behalf of the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition

In 2008, the Coalition once again participated in the organization of an international women's day event in Moncton under the title: EQUALITY ONCE AND FOR ALL. We also co-hosted with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women three lunch and learn events: in Saint Andrews, Moncton and Saint John.

2008 also saw the adoption of the 10 year provincial government early childhood strategy called: BE READY FOR SUCCESS. The provincial government announced, through this initiative that four early learning and child care pilot sites would be created in the province: Moncton, Saint John, Roberval and Bath.

In the fall of 2008, the Coalition participated in a meeting with the provincial government and Canadian Child Care Educational Property Fund. This company made a proposal to build up to 65 privately-owned child care centres. A separate organization, not yet determined, would have operated the centres. The operator would have made lease payments to the centre owners in exchange for the use of the space.

The proposal asked the provincial government to provide public funding to the new centres through parent fee subsidies and staff wage enhancements, as it does with other licensed programs. In addition, the proposal called for the Province to be directly involved in at least one significant new way. The Province was asked to provide a legal guarantee to the centre owners, committing to the required lease payments in the event that the operator defaulted. In other words, the proposal sought a public guarantee of private investment returns.

After the meeting, both the Coalition and the association Early Childhood Care and Education NB provided a list of our concerns with the proposal. Luckily the provincial government declined going ahead with it. Since then, we have learned that

the same representatives from this company are now seeking to list a company called Eldeun on the Toronto Stock Exchange to raise capital to expand operations across the country.

In 2008, the Coalition also assisted the Ste Thérèse child care program save this Dieppe after-school program. The provincial government was building a new school but had not included space in the new school for the after-school program. This mobilization campaign led to positive results as space was located in the new construction to house this non-profit program.

In January 2009, the Coalition secured funding to begin our work on the Mother's Voices Initiative. Information on this project is highlighted separately in this report. This project permitted to hire a second staff person at the office. We are thankful for the wonderful contribution that Rachel LeBlanc makes to our overall work and in coordinating the Mother's Voices initiative in particular.



Mother's Voices Workshop Participants in Shédiac, from left to right: Helene Daigle, Anne Martin-Boisvert, Nathalie Ouellet, Tammy Leger, and Nicole Gautreau.

We organized a number of activities throughout the province. A press conference was organized in collaboration with the several other organizations in early 2009 to highlight the need for gender analysis in the provincial and federal governments' budget processes. This analysis would ensure that programs such as child care were adequately funded. In 2009, inter-

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ACTIVITIES ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

Our child care advocacy efforts have not been limited to the provincial level. The New Brunswick Child Care Coalition remains an avid participant on the pan-Canadian scene and maintains its partnership with the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada. Our work nationally has focused on working with the Senate and opposition parties to keep child care alive as an issue in the House of Commons.

In September 2008, two representatives from the NB Child Care Coalition participated in a national child care policy forum in Ottawa where the groundwork was laid for the 2008 federal election campaign – CANADA STILL NEEDS CHILD CARE.



canada **STILL** **needs child care**
FEDERAL ELECTION 2008

The Coalition also participated in two pan-Canadian child care tours. One organized by Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) on preventing the privatization of child care and one by the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC).

Working to prevent the corporatization of child care remains also a focus at the national level. Recent news articles announced yet another attempt to corporatize child care in Canada. This time, the company named Edleun Inc. plans to become Canada's first publicly listed commercial child care chain. Those who believe that profit should not be made at the expense of children should be concerned and investors should beware.

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national women's day events were organized in both Fredericton and Moncton. Child care was highlighted at both events.

In addition to the work highlighted above, the Coalition also participated in several community meetings, meetings with elected and government officials and submitted briefs to several public consultation processes; such as the Self Sufficiency Task Force, pre-budget consultations, Premier's Community Task Force on the Non-profit Sector. The Coalition is also represented at numerous tables such as the francophone early childhood network, Self Sufficiency Round table.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this work possible. Since the creation of the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition in 2006, the profile of child care has raised significantly in the province. Unfortunately our future is on shaky ground. As this report is being written, we have learned that Status of Women Canada will not be approving the projects submitted by our sister organizations: the Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick (francophone feminist organization) and the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity. When our current project work expires, it is likely that our funding will not be renewed. This means that the work of our volunteers will be all the more important as we move ahead in furthering child care public policy and investment in New Brunswick.

PROJECT PROFILE: MOTHER'S VOICES

The Mother's Voices Project began with questions we heard from mothers in New Brunswick. Mothers participating in round table discussions on child care, organized by Corporate Research Associates, had told us in 2007 that the lack of affordable child care put them at an economic disadvantage.

This project recognizes the expertise of mothers. They are often the ones who make sacrifices to balance work-family life. This project explores with mothers how government funding affects the big picture for their community as it relates to child care. We were the students and they, the guides. So we hit the road and met with our bilingual panel of mothers in different communities. We visited Dieppe, Fredericton (x2), Campbellton, Shédiac, Moncton and St-Andrew's.

For the workshops, we used 3 funding models that were developed by child care researchers. These three funding models are situated on a continuum. The first model, "fund the parent" is government funding that goes directly into parent's pockets to spend as they please, or is paid on behalf of parents in the form of a subsidy. Child care is seen as a product, and parents are required to pay or apply for a subsidy if they cannot afford the actual cost. A contemporary example of this funding model is the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB).

The second funding model, "fund the program" involves government funding that is put into a variety of programs. Child care providers are obligated to apply for the different pockets of program funding individually. The third funding model is called "fund the system", where government funding is put into a system that can support the individual programs. To better understand this funding model we could compare the fund the system approach to kindergarten in the school system.

Currently, most of New Brunswick's child care funding goes mostly into initiatives that fall under fund the parent side of the continuum.

We wanted to know how New Brunswick mothers see the current funding model for child care. Does it respond to the needs of their community? Moms had plenty to talk about. The mothers who participated shared their struggles and their frustrations, specifically as it relates to barriers for them to access child care. Our participants also shared their perspective on the child care funding models. Many mothers who participated felt that the current funding model did not position their community for wide-spread accessibility for child care. There was a strong indication from our participants that mothers can identify benefits to rethinking our current child care funding model.

We thank Martha Friendly and Jane Beach for their contributions to this project in research and development of the materials that were used for the workshops.



WHO WE ARE

The New Brunswick Child Care Coalition is a group of New Brunswick organizations and individuals advocating for high quality, universally accessible, affordable, inclusive, non-profit, publicly funded child care programs, with trained and well-remunerated staff, for all New Brunswick children and their families who want or need it.

The New Brunswick Child Care Coalition is an affiliate organization of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

WHAT WE DO

The New Brunswick Child Care Coalition is working towards:

- The development of a comprehensive, accessible and affordable non-profit early learning child care system in New Brunswick and across Canada.
- The right of every child and family to quality early learning child care within his or her own community.
- A range of inclusive choices throughout the province of New Brunswick on reserve as well as off reserve
- Stable, adequate government funding, with accountability
- Early learning child care workers' rights to wages and working conditions, which reflect the level of training, responsibility and value of work performed.
- Community involvement in policy, procedure and program decisions.

Here are some of the ways we are doing this work:

- We provide public information and develop public education campaigns about early learning child care related issues

2007-2009 Board Members

Dee Dee Daigle
Chairperson

Manon Cormier-Viel
Secretary

Laudia LeBlanc
Treasurer

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Director

Sandra Harding
Director

Carolyn Carter
Director

Employees

Jody Dallaire
Executive Director

Rachel LeBlanc
Project Coordinator

Financial and community partners

We wish to thank the following organizations for their financial and political support:

Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Association francophone des parents du Nouveau-Brunswick

Canadian Labour Congress

Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

Canadian Union of Public Employees

Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada

Coalition for Pay Equity

Early Childhood Education and Care New Brunswick

New Brunswick Federation of Labour

New Brunswick Nurses Union

New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees

Public Service Alliance of Canada

Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick

- We support and report on current research social policy issues related to children and their care
- We develop a cooperative working relationship with early learning child care related organizations and others of like mind
- We facilitate information sharing among the members of the Coalition with governments and with the public.

WHERE WE CAME FROM

In March 2001, a number of parents attended a public meeting hosted by Child Care Connexions Garde à l'Enfance in Moncton to discuss the lack of quality, affordable child care programs. It was at this moment *that Parents for Quality Care* was born. This committee of concerned parents met regularly to discuss the need for government funding in child care services to ensure that programs were affordable and available to parents while ensuring that their children were in quality programs.

In 2001, *Parents for Quality Care* became affiliated with the *Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada* through a pan-Canadian project called Parent Voices.

In June 2005, *Parents for Quality Care* decided to broaden its support base to include membership from the community at large as well as organizational memberships. In March 2006, the organization changed its name to the *New Brunswick Child Care Coalition* to reflect this inclusiveness.

Since its foundation, the Coalition has been active in lobbying the government, political parties, as well as raising public awareness about the importance of publicly funded high quality, accessible, affordable, inclusive and non-profit child care programs.

VOLUNTEERS

The Coalition has benefited from numerous hours of volunteer help. Many gave time to lobby their elected officials and to organize and attend public events. We offer our most sincere thanks to all of them – their energy and ideas really made the work of the Coalition progress and increased the visibility of the Coalition in communities throughout the province.

Heartfelt thanks must go out to a few dedicated individuals from outside of our province who contributed to the work of the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition as volunteers.

Mab Oloman, thanks for the many volunteer hours put into analyzing and providing feedback on the on-going threat of corporate child care and for your assistance in preparing our analysis of the New Brunswick Early Learning and Child Care Act.

Bozica Costigliola, thanks for your volunteer work in drafting several press releases and op-eds on behalf of the organization, often with very short turnaround times.

AFFILIATIONS

Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC)

The CCAAC is a national non-profit, membership-based and regionally representative organization. It has a twenty-five year history of promoting a publicly funded, inclusive, quality, non-profit child care system. The association's membership reaches more than 4 million Canadians, including parents, caregivers, researchers and students as well as women's, antipoverty, labour, social justice, disability and rural organizations.

For more information about the CCAAC, please visit their web site at: www.ccaac.ca

MEMBERS

The Coalition has a current membership of 110 individuals and 35 organizations.