



On September 27, New Brunswickers will go to the polls to elect a new government. The New Brunswick Child Care Coalition is preparing tools to support you in raising child care with your electoral candidates.

Together we will look at and evaluate how the political parties propose to solve the child care crisis in New Brunswick. Will they propose solutions that will work based on the evidence and the needs of parents or will they propose rhetoric and slogans?

Over the years, we have heard our political parties tell us about the record investments they are making in child care - all the while very little changes on the ground for parents.

For example:

- 1. Parent fees remain high, averaging \$600 per month for infant care and \$500 for preschool aged children. For many families, this is simply unaffordable.**
- 2. The single most important predictor of quality in child care is the staff. That is why it is important to have a well-paid and well-trained workforce.** New Brunswick has the lowest training requirements of all Canadian provinces. We have had success in improving staff wages. Staff wages went from \$6.76- \$7.00 per hour in October 2001 to of \$14.08 for trained staff and \$12.33 for untrained staff in March 2010.

This increase over time was made possible by direct government investment in child care programs, along with accountability criteria.

We must elect MLA's who will build on this work of improving staff wages and training. For the past two and a half years, child care staff, child care operators and government representatives have been meeting to evaluate if pay inequity exists in the child care sector. The provincial government has committed to funding the necessary wage adjustments if this process finds wage discrimination. We need to make sure that our next government honours this commitment.

- 3. Wait lists remain long, especially if you are looking for infant care. Approximately 20% of children aged 0-12 can access licensed child care.**

Recently, the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition released the results of the Mother's Voices Project. Participants in this project examined three ways that government can choose to fund child care: fund the parent, fund the program and fund the system.

Project participants felt that investing directly into programs is necessary for their community to be able to have accessible and affordable child care.



It is ***your*** voices telling the stories of your community, your child, your family and your child care program that will make the difference.

In the coming weeks, we will be posting our Election tool kit with ideas, tools and materials to use to make child care an issue for all the candidates in your riding.

Until then, here's how you can get election ready:

- 1. Make sure you are on the Provincial Voters List.**
<http://www1.gnb.ca/elections/FAQs/FAQcategory-e.asp?CATEGORYID=2&TYPE=2>
- 2. Make sure everyone you know is on the voter's list.**
- 3. Collect the names and contact info for the candidates in your riding.**
- 4. Write a letter to the editor, outlining why child care solutions, not slogans are needed during the upcoming election.**

To make it easy for you to be heard, we will print and mail copies of any Coalition advocacy materials that you want to use in your communities during the election for no cost. Just email us at nbccc.csqnb@rogers.com with the name of the document, the number you need and your address – and they will be on their way.

In the coming weeks, we urge you to join us once again as we rise with strength and determination. Make this election count in your community. Use your creativity, your unique expressions and your skill to get the child care message heard. Our province deserves a quality, community based, affordable and accessible child care SYSTEM.

Together we will make sure that quality child care is available and affordable to all New Brunswick children and families who need it!