

September 8, 2020

The Honourable Maryam Monsef, P.C., M.P.
Minister for Women and Gender and Rural Economic Development
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

The Canadian Federation of University women (CFUW) works to improve the status of women and to promote social justice in Canada and abroad. One of our foremost issues over the past several years has been to call for a nation-wide, affordable, accessible, well-regulated, high-quality child care program that helps all parents be more effective contributors to the national economy.

Why is this important to your Ministry?

If your government is striving for gender equity, as it plainly states; if your government is working to help the middle class; if your government is dedicated to creating an infrastructure of support for families; if your government wants to ensure future economic development in small and medium enterprises; then affordable, accessible, child care must be front and centre and all provinces and territories must participate.

A confidence vote may be coming on the return to Parliament in mid-September and as many people have noted, including national NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, "There is a massive child care crisis, and Covid-19 has just amplified what we already knew was a problem". He is recommending an infusion of \$2 billion dollars at a minimum and a further \$10 billion over the next four years to move towards a universally accessible child care system across the country.

Create a national Child Care Program immediately

As the national president of CFUW, with a membership of over 8000 women, I am writing to call on the Government of Canada and all provincial/territorial governments to create such a child care program with immediate attention, throughout our country. The pandemic has brought to the forefront the need for federal support to ensure that equitable Child Care is guaranteed and available for all parents. Funding support and monitoring of that investment from the Federal government to bolster funding provided by provinces and territories is essential to ensure the continued opening of our

economy. CFUW members in Quebec praise the model of \$25/day child care - it has freed parents to more easily participate in economic activities benefitting their families and the province. Those same members wonder why with the model proven in Quebec, it is not implemented more widely.

In your 2019 platform, you addressed child care only so far. Parents need you to *“move forward with creating up to 250,000 more before and after school spaces for kids under 10, with at least 10 percent of these new spaces set aside for care during extended hours....*

We will also move forward with more support for our early childhood educators, to ensure that across the country, they are better paid and trained to take care of our kids. This means lower tuition costs for people getting their early childhood education degree, and extra help to cover the costs for early childhood educators seeking further training.

And to ensure that every parent – no matter where they live – has access to quality, affordable childcare, we will work with provinces and territories to create a national secretariat that will lay the groundwork for a pan-Canadian child care system.” Liberal Party Platform 2019

We are waiting for these actions to begin and for this Secretariat to begin its work and move to create real change in child care workers’, parents’ and child care realities across Canada. Please, do not delay such work because of the pandemic, it is urgently needed now. *Canadians deserve a high quality, accessible, affordable system that has the health and well-being of children at the core. Canadian families deserve a coordinated well-funded response to Child Care from federal and provincial/territorial governments. The benefits of such a system would be enormous to children and to the quality of life of Canadians, and essential to economic recovery.*

With Covid19 shutting down schools, day care and after school care, it was obvious that these essential services affected the employment of parents who had to stay home and care for and school their children.

The pandemic clearly demonstrates that Child Care is an essential foundation for economic recovery. We are asking that Child Care be funded as an essential service and for Federal oversight to ensure that all provinces and territories guarantee that child care is affordable, easily accessed (including with the needs of shift workers in mind) and well-regulated with Federal as well as provincial oversight.

[The Affordable Child Care for All Plan](#) (2020) was developed by Child Care Now through extensive consultations with those most concerned with the well-being of children, gender equality, economic security of families, social inclusion and equity. It addresses the need for “a long-term, phased approach to building the solid universal child care system Canada needs. The Plan provides for an increase in Canada’s federal ELCC budget to \$1 billion in 2020, and a further increase of \$1 billion each year for ten years so as to meet the internationally recommended spending benchmark and achieve

the goal of affordable, high-quality, inclusive child care for all across Canada.” And it recommended establishing a federal Secretariat for Child Care.

As Tiffany Gooch wrote in the Toronto Star (Aug. 25th) “In order to find and construct the necessary immediate space and long-term infrastructure, ensure workers in child care are appropriately protected through COVID-19 and compensated moving forward, and deliver streamlined and dependable service offerings across the country, urgent action is needed.”

Please coordinate your efforts in Cabinet and make a public statement, rally the provinces and territories to support the effort to provide the necessary affordable, accessible, well-regulated child care programs and care work training, support infrastructure needs, use the necessary funds to establish federal secretariat to ensure compliance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathryn Wilkinson". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Kathryn Wilkinson
CFUW National President