

September 8, 2021

The Hon. Erin O'Toole, PC, MP
Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Sent via email



Dear Mr. O'Toole:

Canadians have been waiting for over 30 years for a national high-quality universal child care plan. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the critical importance of child care. Many women have had to reduce their work hours, or have had to leave their jobs entirely, to care for children.

And now the federal government has reached agreements with 8 of the provinces and territories that will move us towards an affordable, quality child care system.

Mr. O'Toole, you have refused to directly answer a very clear and important question. Will you honour those agreements reached with the provinces and territories? Or will you renege on them and rip them up?

The fact that the 8 signed provincial and territorial agreements have been signed by Liberal, NDP, and Conservative premiers is a true indication that, at the provincial level (despite political differences), the need for a national child care plan is recognized and needs to be moved forward.

The National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) has been a strong proponent of the need for a national child care system that is universally accessible, publicly funded, and high quality, which also fairly compensates and supports its workforce. We have worked with our members, child care advocates, and the labour movement to highlight both the need and the benefits of establishing a national child care system for families and our future—our children.

A poll commissioned by NUPGE in November 2020 revealed clear public support (86%) for Canadian families to have access to quality child care, regardless of income. Within your own voters, 77% believed that access to quality child care is needed.

Your election platform highlights Quebec as an example of how increasing child care affordability increases Canadian women's participation in the workforce. The Quebec \$10-a-day plan has shown that affordable child care does increase women's workforce participation, boosts the economy, and provides children with a positive start.



What is starkly missing from your platform is whether your party will honour the signed child care agreements that are based on the \$10-a-day plan.

As Canadians head to the polls, it is critical that they have all the information regarding essential programs such as child care. You note in your platform that nobody should be prevented from getting back to work because they can't afford child care, and this is absolutely true. Honouring the signed agreements, will not only assist Canadians to get back to work but will also move Canada, its families, and its economy forward.

Throughout the election campaign you have been asked directly if you will cancel the child care agreements, and your response has been evasive. Given that child care is a key issue for so many Canadians, they deserve the respect of a definitive answer to this question.

On behalf of our 400,000 members and all Canadians, I strongly urge you to honour the signed agreements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LB' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Larry Brown
President

cc: Bert Blundon, Secretary-Treasurer