Family Network
Réseau de la famille

CPRN DISCUSSION PAPER

Two Policy Paradigms: Family Responsibility and Investing in Children

by

Caroline Beauvais, M.Sc.

and

Jane Jenson, Ph.D.

CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|12

February 2001

CPRN RCRPP

Canadian Policy Research Networks
250 Albert Street, Suite 600
Ottawa, ON   K1P 6M1
http://www.cprn.org

Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. (CPRN)
600 – 250 Albert Street Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6M1
Tel: (613) 567-7500 Fax: (613) 567-7640
Web Site: http://www.cprn.org

Two Policy Paradigms: Family Responsibility and Investing in Children

By

Caroline Beauvais, M.Sc.

and

Jane Jenson, Ph.D.

Foreword

The Family Network of Canadian Policy Research Networks has invested a great deal of time and energy in the past few years examining policies for preschool children and their families. A comparison of provincial policies was first undertaken in 1999 in *Comparative Family Policies: Six Provincial Stories*. Since then, CPRN has continued to research and update its inventory of Canadian policies for families with young children, and refine its thinking about the approaches taken to family policy in general. This discussion paper, "Two Policy Paradigms: Family Responsibility and Investing in Children," is the result of those efforts. It also benefits from the additional research undertaken on policies for school-aged children, which will be published in the forthcoming study, *School-aged Children across Canada: A Patchwork of Public Policies*.

This paper explores the effects on children of the policy thinking that emerged in Canada following the Second World War. With the exception of child protection and education, most policies were geared towards adults and their needs, and hinged on the adult's relationship to the labour force. This line of thinking assumes that parents are fully responsible for decisions about their children. We have termed this approach the "Family Responsibility Paradigm" because public responsibility for young children is largely confined to helping parents with some child care expenses, supplementing the income of those whose earnings are too low to support their family, or tiding parents over during temporary withdrawals from the work force.

Beginning in the 1980s, a new paradigm began to emerge, one in which children and their needs became the primary focus. One set of reasons for this shift is found in the challenges of restructured labour forces and family life. Parents' options for labour force participation and child rearing have narrowed. Most families need two incomes in order to provide for themselves and their children. The recent proliferation of policies aimed directly at children leads us to refer to this new way of thinking as the "Investing in Children Paradigm." Investments range from early intervention programs to integrated service provision to income transfers designed to raise children out of poverty. New information on healthy child development and school readiness has stimulated efforts to lessen the risks associated with socioeconomic disadvantage and capture the benefits of educational preschool programs for all young children.

Both paradigms currently co-exist, and this paper compares the advantages and disadvantages of each. It unpacks the complexity of these paradigms to enable us to think about how to retain the best of each in a mixed model, rather than forcing a choice between them.

I would like to thank Caroline Beauvais and Jane Jenson for the research they undertook to prepare this report and for advancing our current thinking on this subject. I would also like to thank CPRN's funders, who are named at the back of this report, for their vital support in conducting the research that made this next step possible.

Judith Maxwell
February 2001

Executive Summary

This discussion paper extends the analysis carried out in the *Best Policy Mix for Canada's Children* research program in two ways. First, it expands the coverage of policies to all 10 provinces. Second, it identifies and maps the consequences of new patterns of policy thinking about the responsibilities of families and governments for the well-being of children. Therefore, the paper consists of an analysis, accompanied by Appendices that provide detailed inventories of current programs directed towards children, and families with dependent children, in Canada.

In the 1980s and even more rapidly in the 1990s, new programs with "child" or "children" in the title have proliferated. The provinces and the federal government, individually and at times together, have all begun to address children's needs in a more comprehensive fashion, seeking to develop more integrated services. They also have reformed their public administration, setting up new ministries and agencies responsible for children. The focus on children is a welcome change, but it is not totally unproblematic. There are also some downsides to the shift in emphasis, in the form of new policy silences and challenges.

Moreover, to say that children occupy a central place in policy discourse does *not* mean that children are necessarily better off or that everything promised is being achieved. Child poverty rates remain high. Increases in income transfers have begun to reduce the depth of child poverty, but there is a still a gap.

This paper describes this shift in policy focus, by comparing two policy paradigms. The purpose in speaking of "paradigms" is to clarify a change in thinking that is sufficiently widespread that it makes a contribution to reshaping the social policy regime. This paper does not seek to provide a complete analysis of Canada's "welfare regimes." Rather, it focuses on four issues, by describing the response to the following questions in each paradigm:

- Who has responsibility for child well-being?
- What is the logic of access to income transfers and benefits for families with children?
- What assumptions about the labour force participation of parents shape this thinking?
- Which services and supports exist for non-parental child care and child development programs?

The first paradigm, well installed by the 1960s, is termed the "Family Responsibility Paradigm." Its hallmark is that parents are almost solely responsible for making decisions about their children's well-being. The role of public policy is to facilitate their decision-making by allowing a range of options to emerge. However, finding the necessary money to support certain options is *also* the responsibility of families.

Income transfers (for example, social assistance), Employment Insurance, the tax regime, and services all take one key relationship into account – that of adults to the paid labour force. The tax regime and other policy instruments are used to allow families to choose full-time parental child care or to choose labour force participation. Adults' access to benefits and services depends on their labour force status. In the 1970s and 1980s, this paradigm also made room for gender equality, facilitating women's equal and equitable access to the labour force by helping to ensure that child care responsibilities would not hinder their participation.

The instruments upon which this paradigm relies – such as employment leaves, tax deductions, and subsidies for child care costs – are still in use. The paradigm underpins a number of recent innovative actions including: the federal government's decision to substantially increase paid parental leaves within the Employment Insurance regime; Quebec's draft bill that would extend parental insurance to almost every new working mother, as well as offer a separate paternity leave; and the extension of unpaid parental leave in most provinces from, for several, 17 or 18 weeks to 35 to 37 weeks and, in some cases, up to 52 weeks.

The notion that policies could simply facilitate parents' decision-making has become less sustainable in recent years, however. One set of reasons is found in the challenges of restructured labour forces and family life. Parents' options have narrowed. Most families need two salaries or two incomes in order to provide for themselves and their children. In addition, in the 1990s, the labour market failed to provide sufficient market income. During the decade, the number of poor children living in working families rose abruptly, while the number of poor children overall also rose dramatically.

A second set of reasons that this paradigm was judged too limited came from the knowledge base of experts who focused on the potential contribution of early childhood initiatives to the well-being of all children. The justifications emphasized both the need to lessen the risks associated with socioeconomic disadvantage and the knowledge that all children benefit from educational preschool programs. Third, reassessments of income security began to focus on the unintended negative consequences associated with programs designed for other times, and in particular the creation of the "welfare wall." The end result of that rethinking was that practically everyone was designated as employable, including lone parents caring for young children. Incentive structures were altered to "make work pay" and facilitate the transition into work.

Such questioning of older practices, as well as ideological shifts and new knowledge, have given rise to the second and newer paradigm, labelled here the "Investing in Children Paradigm." The watchword of this paradigm is *investment*. Its policy instruments are designed to express this commitment to investment, seeking to spend money where it is most needed and where it will generate a positive return. These policies achieve this by focusing in particular on two aspects of families' needs – income and services.

This paradigm pays more attention to efforts to generate positive outcomes for children. Parents, however, are not the focus and their needs sometimes fall from view. All parents are assumed to be responsible for themselves and for earning their living by their own labour. Gone is the option of full-time parenting except for those who can afford it. Gone too is attention to gender inequalities. Yet the paradigm also envisions a partnership with parents, making the community responsible for investing in children alongside parents.

The second paradigm is being created alongside the first, such that there is a *co-existence* of two ways of thinking about family responsibilities, social policy, the role of the state, and children's needs – including what they are, who is responsible for addressing them, and who should pay for them.

This paper proceeds through the following steps, each of which forms a section of the document. Section 1 introduces the notion of two paradigms. In Section 2, we present the two policy paradigms in brief, identifying their essential characteristics. We describe the policy content of the first paradigm in more detail in Section 3. Next, in Section 4, we uncover three signs that there is a paradigm shift occurring by mapping adjustments in social policy and governance, as well as in policies directly focused on children. These broad changes have come in response to a set of recent and serious challenges to managing the interface between work life and family life. In Section 5, we document the programmatic content of the emerging paradigm directed towards children, while the conclusion in Section 6 sets the two paradigms side-by-side, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each.

How might we assess the present state of play, as these two paradigms currently exist beside each other? Is one better than another? Should the second replace the first, or should we fight to defend the old ways? Is it possible to retain the best of both, while eliminating the weak points of each?

Answers to these questions are difficult. They depend on a range of factors, including basic value preferences. The answers also depend on whether the "family" imagined is a two-parent upper-income family, or a two-parent or lone-parent low-income family. Therefore, one way to begin to unpack the complexity is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each paradigm. By doing so, this discussion paper helps make it possible to think about how to retain the best of each paradigm in a mixed model, rather than forcing a choice between them.

Contents

Two Policy Paradigms:
Family Responsibility and Investing in Children

1.0 Introduction

For years, government benefits and services to young children and their families appeared in the accounts under a range of program headings, and in a dispersed fashion. Beginning in the 1960s, the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) and provincial income security programs, for example, subsidized child care, while Unemployment Insurance and provincial labour standards regulated paid and unpaid parental leaves, respectively. Health departments protected public health through immunization programs, for example, while child protection services fell within the purview of departments of justice and community services.

Nor did these governments *believe* that they had a policy *for children*. To be sure, after the Second World War, the federal government did institute universal Family Allowances. But they were a scaled down version of the program that had been proposed to cover the basic costs of raising a child.[1] As for the provinces, they all had policies on social assistance, employment and health, and they addressed children's requirements under these more general headings. The only exceptions to this generalization were child protection services and education, which clearly take children as their clientele.

Then, in the decade of the 1980s and even more rapidly in the 1990s, new programs with "child" or "children" in the title have proliferated. In 1989, the House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution "to seek to achieve the goal of eliminating poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000." The provinces and federal government, individually and at times together, all have begun to address children's needs in a more comprehensive fashion, seeking to develop more integrated services. They also have reformed their public administration, setting up new ministries and agencies responsible for children (see Appendix A, Table 1). The focus on children is a welcome, but it is not totally unproblematic. There are also some downsides to the shift in emphasis, in the form of new policy silences and challenges.

Moreover, to say that children occupy a central place in policy discourse does *not* mean that children are necessarily better off or that everything promised is being achieved. Child poverty rates remain high, and indeed are higher in Canada than in 16 of the 23 richest countries in the world (UNICEF, 2000). Increases in income transfers have begun to reduce the depth of child poverty – that is, the gap between the poverty line and the average income of poor families – but there is a still a gap.

1 Canada's Family Allowances in 1950 were $5.95 per month per child, a sum that constituted only about 5 percent of an average family's monthly income (Jenson with Thompson, 1999: 3).

This paper describes this shift in policy focus, by comparing two policy paradigms, one well installed by the 1960s and a second that is newer. The analysis is based on detailed inventories of current programs directed towards children and families with dependent children in Canada (see Appendix A for the numbered tables and boxes referred to throughout this text), as well as some historical analysis of policy development.

This paper proceeds through the following steps, each of which forms a section of the document. First we present the two policy paradigms in brief, identifying their essential characteristics (Section 2). Then we describe the policy content of the first paradigm in more detail (Section 3). Next, we uncover three signs that there is a paradigm shift occurring by mapping adjustments in social policy and governance, as well as in policies directly focused on children (Section 4). These broad changes have come in response to a set of recent and serious challenges to managing the work life–family life interface. In Section 5, we document the programmatic content of the emerging paradigm directed towards children, while the conclusion (Section 6) sets the two paradigms side-by-side, assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each.

2.0 Two Policy Paradigms

It is sometimes hard to determine whether a new policy paradigm is emerging. Programs affecting children have been frequently adjusted over the last five decades. Every year seems to bring an important reform in at least one crucial program area. Despite this appearance of constant flux, it is nonetheless possible to discern differences in magnitude. Some changes have been of such significance that we can say a new paradigm is taking shape. We argue here that a "social investment state" is currently taking shape (Saint-Martin, 2000). Its core is constituted of policies directed towards children and towards adults caring for dependent children. Despite this shift, however, existing practices and the earlier paradigm have not been banished. Therefore, this paper describes the *co-existence* of two ways of thinking about family responsibilities, social policy, the role of the state, and children's needs including what they are, who is responsible for addressing them, and who should pay for them.

In order to demonstrate the extent of change, this paper characterises two different ways of thinking about addressing needs and meeting challenges for children. The purpose in speaking of these differences as "paradigms" is to clarify a change in thinking that is sufficiently widespread that it makes a contribution to reshaping the social policy regime. This paper does not seek to provide a complete analysis of Canada's "welfare regimes".[2] Rather, it focuses on four issues by describing the response to the following questions in each paradigm:

- Who has responsibility for child well-being?
- What is the logic of access to income transfers and benefits for families with children?
- What assumptions about the labour force participation of parents shape this thinking?
- Which services and supports exist for non-parental child care and child development programs?

2 Boychuk (1998) provides a book length comparison of social policy regimes in the 10 provinces. Esping-Andersen (1999) proposes a revision of his classic 1990 analysis of three welfare regimes, in which he describes the patterns of shifting responsibility around the welfare "triangle" of state, market and families.

One policy paradigm has been well in place for several decades. It addresses the needs of children indirectly, because parents are assumed to have complete responsibility for ensuring that their preschool children thrive and are prepared to enter school. Schools have responsibility for overseeing the education of older children, but the rest of their development remains in the hands of their parents. Income transfers and benefits respond to the needs of adults, in the context of their relationship to the labour force, and in particular their capacity to earn enough income for themselves and their families. Social policy generates separate programs for adults with different relationships to the labour force.

Unemployment Insurance (called Employment Insurance or EI since 1996), maternity and parental leaves, and other measures for balancing work and family life are good examples of instruments utilized in this paradigm for those who are *in* the labour force. But so too were social assistance programs that permitted full-time parental child care by social assistance clients who were *out* of the labour force.[3]

Figure 1 describes the answers to the four questions posed above for the first paradigm.

Figure 1

The Family Responsibility Paradigm

Who has responsibility for child well-being?

- Programs for young children assume that parents are responsible for all decisions, unless they put their children at-risk. Experts are involved only when parents "fail."

What is the logic of access to income transfers and benefits for families with children?

- Benefits are delivered to adults, in accordance with their relationship to the labour force. A key factor is whether they are "in" or "out" of the labour force.

What assumptions about the labour force participation of parents shape this thinking?

- Parents may choose their relationship to the labour force by deciding whether to seek a job or provide full-time parental care.

Which services and supports exist for non-parental child care and child development programs?

- There are few incentives to use a particular form of non-parental child care. Parents are left to choose, based on their own resources.

3 This thinking is a legacy of Mothers' Allowances, which, in what Boychuk terms "conservative regimes," the payments by the state were intended to supplant the labour force participation of a lone parent because the state regarded "her function in the home of greater social importance than her economic earnings" (1998: 37).

While programs may help parents to balance work and family responsibilities, it leaves the decisions about *how* to do so up to them. The selection of and access to child care services is a parental responsibility, for example. The state assures safety in regulated child care but permits unregulated care as well. Government may help some parents partially cover the costs of non-parental care so that they can participate in the labour force, but sends few signals about the quality of care.

This paradigm continues to shape policy design, in particular in programs for parental leave and tax deductions. However, a second paradigm has appeared alongside the first, and is gaining popularity. It describes the responsibility for children's well-being as one of partnership – parents are not left to their own devices to provide all that their children need. Indeed, in this paradigm, societal well-being depends on children's well-being.

Figure 2 describes the answers to the four questions posed above for the second paradigm.

Figure 2

The Investing in Children Paradigm

Who has responsibility for child well-being?

- Programs assume that parents play the primary role in their children's lives but that other actors are also important. This involves *partnerships* – with parents, the voluntary sector, among governments, and with experts.

What is the logic of access to income transfers and benefits for families with children?

- Adults gain access to many social benefits and income supports *because they have children under 18*.

What assumptions about the labour force participation of parents shape this thinking?

- Labour force *participation* is encouraged, supported and sometimes required of parents, especially those with low incomes.

Which services and supports exist for non-parental child care and child development programs?

- Early childhood initiatives, including high quality non-parental child care, are key instruments.

In this vision, *children are investments for the future*. They come to the fore, to the "heart of our choices," not only because they have present needs, but also because of the consequences of actions taken now for the future of the society. Therefore, early childhood initiatives, quality child care, and so on become important policy instruments. It is legitimate to help parents realize these investments.

At the same time, the treatment of adults is different. Their relationship to the labour force has a reduced effect on whether they receive income transfers or services. *Adults raising children* gain access to a wide range of benefits and services that adults without young children can not access. This is the case whether they have a job, are unemployed, or living on social assistance. At the same time, these programs are founded on the assumption is that *all* adults should participate in the paid labour force and, therefore, they seek to promote employability and sustain participation. Caring for children as a lone mother is no longer accepted as a substitute for labour force participation.

In this second paradigm, the range of options is limited. Choices between parental and non-parental child care are left only to those wealthy enough to live on a single salary. In exchange, however, some jurisdictions have developed financial inducements to use high quality non-parental child care by lowering its cost. Others, however, have not, and so parents are left with no choice but to use inexpensive and unregulated care.

We call this second paradigm Investing in Children because of all of the talk about investments for the future and about positive child outcomes. By labeling it thus we do not mean to say either that children receive the most attention or that these investments are necessarily generous ones. Rather, we label it this way because its proponents describe their actions – or, more typically, the need for action – in these terms.

For example, the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), one of the most important sources of new knowledge and thinking about children and child development, named its major conference *Investing in Children: A National Research Conference* and identified one of its two guiding questions as "Are we under-investing in children?"[4] Another example comes from the important study *Reversing the Real Brain Drain: The Early Years Study* that the Hon. Margaret McCain and Dr. Fraser Mustard presented to the Government of Ontario in 1999. They wrote:

> Investment by all sectors of society in the early years is as important as our investment in education to ensure Ontario has a highly competent and well-educated population, all necessary for a strong economy and a thriving democracy. … To strengthen our economy for the future and the livability our communities, we must develop the best possible developmental opportunities for the next generation (McCain and Mustard, 1999: 2).

Similarly, in 1998, the National Children's Alliance entitled one of its publications *Investing in Children and Youth: A National Children's Agenda*. These are only three examples among many that illustrate the lens for viewing children as an investment for the future.

This second paradigm implies a particular role for the state. It is a "social investment state" and its investments – in services and also in income transfers in the name of equity – are justified by their supposed long-term pay-offs in terms of school success and future well-being. Rather than focusing on equity now, they seek to provide equality of opportunity for future success.

---

4 For information on the NLSCY, see http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/nlscy-elnej.

Not all governments and not all of their actions subscribe to this vision of social investment, of course. Other ideas underpin their actions. There is, indeed, a third "paradigm" that might be discerned. It is one that assigns practically no role for the state, one which would simply leave all matters, including those related to children, up to adults. Few public decisions and very little spending (and therefore no taxes) should interfere with families' privacy. Since this third model envisages hardly any public role, it will not be discussed in this paper mapping recent public policies, although the discussion must be cognizant of its political appeal.

3.0 The Family Responsibility Paradigm

The hallmark of this paradigm is that parents are almost solely responsible for making decisions about their children's well-being. The role of public policy is to facilitate their decision-making by allowing a range of options to emerge. However, finding the necessary money to support certain options is *also* the responsibility of families.

Public dollars spent on programs are limited, and parents must always make a significant contribution. For example, in the field of child care, parental fees are important for the functioning of child care centres, although there are differences across provinces. In 1998, the smallest proportion of costs covered by parents was 34 percent (in Manitoba) and the highest was 82 percent (in Newfoundland) (CRRU, 2000: 108]. Therefore, in all cases, parents seeking a place in a child care centre had to be prepared to devote substantial resources to their selected option.

To elaborate on this example, a calculation by Manitoba Agriculture, reported by the Vanier Institute of the Family (2000: 137), shows that the average annual cost to a family of raising an infant girl to her first birthday was $9,884. Of that, fully $5,963 went to child care, that is, 60 percent of the cost. Over her whole childhood to the age of 18, her parents would spend $52,029 on child care (calculated to occur all by the age of 10). This is the largest single expenditure category for families – exceeding the cost of shelter and the household in general (the next highest category) by $15,000 – and all this in the province in which parents pay the smallest part of the costs of child care.

Families are left to their own decisions – and often their own resources – about who will care for children and whether one or two parents will take a job. Some may choose to provide full-time parental care. Two-parent families that can earn sufficient market income with one salary may choose to provide full-time parental child care, as could, until relatively recently, single parents willing to live below the poverty line on social assistance.[5] However, if parents, whether in lone or two-parent families, choose labour market participation, this paradigm does provide some help in balancing work and family responsibilities, via tax deductions and subsidies.

Beyond that, parents are autonomous in their decisions about child rearing, essentially left to their own resources and decisions about *how* to care and about *who* will care for their children. Professionals and experts become involved in child-rearing decisions only if parents fail, putting their children at such risk that they must be taken into protection by the child welfare system.

5 Table 8, Appendix A provides information about the time by which lone parents receiving social assistance must seek work or enter training programs, based on the age of their youngest child.

At the same time, access to income transfers depends on the adults' relationship to the labour force. This paradigm maintains a strict boundary between those who are "in" the labour force and those who are not. In this paradigm, those in the labour force would receive unemployment insurance if they lost their job, while those not in the labour force would receive social assistance. We will see in later sections, however, that this once clear border is now blurred, as labour market agreements often provide "single window" access – for new labour force participants, social assistance recipients, and the unemployed – and "employability" programs encourage labour market participation for all.

Initially, this paradigm rested on an assumption that one male breadwinner was the norm. When the Second World War ended, Ottawa immediately declared redundant the funding for day care centres that it had provided under the *Dominion-Provincial War-Time Agreement* and stopped paying its share. The only two provinces that had participated in the Agreement, Quebec and Ontario, concurred. As men came back from the war, women were expected to leave the factories and other jobs they had occupied "for the duration" and to return home to care for their own children.

Day care centres shut their doors, because few people had yet noticed that one of the major social changes of the 20th century was already under way.[6] By 1970, however, policy-makers could no longer ignore the fact that women, particularly those of prime childbearing age, were entering the labour force in huge numbers. Policy began to be changed and new instruments to be put into place (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Policy Instruments of the Family Responsibility Paradigm

- Leaves – maternity, parental and family.
- Tax advantages for families choosing parental child care.
- Tax recognition of the costs of employment.
- Child care subsidies.
- Social assistance – available for lone parents choosing parental care.

6 Between 1911 and 1941, the curve measuring women's labour force participation was essentially flat and low, never going over 20 percent. However, between the 1941 and 1951 censuses, the curve rose fully 5 percent, and continued to increase sharply, doubling from 24 percent in 1951 to 52 percent in 1981. After 1991, the curve again flattened, but this time at 58 percent. From 1911 to 1998, men's labour force participation rates declined from 90 to 72 percent (Vanier Institute, 2000: 81).

3.1 Leaves – Maternity, Parental and Family

Governments finally recognized the sea-change associated with rising rates of female labour force participation and wage structures, which made two pay cheques increasingly necessary to maintain family income levels. Through the 1970s, the provinces amended their labour standards to guarantee maternity leave, and eventually parental leave, to birth and adopting parents (see Appendix A, Tables 3 and 4, and Box 1). As the policy inventories in Appendix A show, there is some convergence among the provinces with respect to unpaid maternity leave, but somewhat less on parental leave.

Until 1999, all provinces guaranteed 17 or 18 weeks of unpaid maternity leave to birth mothers (see Appendix A, Table 3). Beyond that, there are quite important distinctions that affect access. Three provinces (British Columbia, Quebec and New Brunswick) guarantee a maternity leave to any employed pregnant woman, and impose no restrictions on the amount of time she must have been in the labour force or with the same employer. In contrast, Nova Scotia requires the woman to have been employed by the same employer for at least a year. The other jurisdictions fall between these two extremes, with most requiring a minimum time with the employer. Certain provinces, as Table 3 describes, permit an extension of the maternity leave, whereas others do not.

The situation is even more varied with respect to the guarantees of unpaid parental leave to birth and adopting parents. Until 2000, these ranged from the situation in Alberta, where birth parents had no right to parental leave, to 52 weeks in Quebec for each parent, taken any time within 70 weeks of the birth.[7] In between these two extremes, the provinces now provide leaves that range from 12 to 37 weeks, most of them offering between 35 and 37 weeks of leave, sometimes for each parent, and sometimes for only one (see Appendix A, Table 4). These guarantees have been changing over the past year, as provinces have moved to align their unpaid parental leaves with the extension of paid leaves as described below[8].

A guarantee of an unpaid leave is important because it permits all mothers and fathers to care for their newborns, while still retaining some rights with respect to their employer. However, it does not help on the financial side. That is where *paid maternity and parental leaves* are crucial.

In 1971, the federal government amended the Unemployment Insurance (UI) regime so as to give new mothers a paid maternity leave of up to 15 weeks, *if they met the eligibility criteria for UI*. At the time, that meant having paid into the insurance regime for 20 weeks. In 1991, leaves were extended in a significant fashion, by allowing either parent to take an additional 10 weeks of leave, and covering adoptive parents as well.

---

7 Since October 2000, Nova Scotia also provides 52 weeks of unpaid parental leave. Its combined pregnancy and parental leave is limited to 52 weeks and must be taken within 52 weeks of the child's arrival.

8 British Colombia, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland all extended the duration of their programs for unpaid parental leave at the end of the year 2000.

Then, continuing in the same direction, as of January 1, 2001, parents will be able to take almost a year of paid leave by combining maternity and parental leaves, if they meet the eligibility requirements of Employment Insurance (see Appendix A, Table 2).[9] This reform has certainly improved parental leaves, by extending them, by reducing the hours that must be worked and insured before a parent qualifies and, in some cases, by cutting the waiting period before benefits begin.[10]

Nonetheless, as before, parents must qualify for benefits under the rules of the Employment Insurance (EI) regime, and they receive only 55 percent of insurable earnings up to a maximum of $413 per week. Unless the employee has a collective agreement or other private "top-up" benefit, this level of salary replacement often means a significant loss of income when a new child is born, a time when family expenses are likely to rise.

In addition, as analysis of the utilization of EI shows, there are significant limitations on parents' ability to access parental leaves. Less than half of women who give birth are eligible for an EI benefit, a statistic that has remained constant since 1988 (CLC, 2000). This gap is partially due to the changes in the qualification rules in the shift from UI to EI, despite the fact that EI now covers part-time workers (many of whom are women).[11] The gap is also partially due to the fact that self-employed workers (a category increasingly filled by women) are not included in the EI regime.[12]

These gaps have led to calls in some quarters for a more far-reaching adjustment. Quebec is the jurisdiction currently most engaged in making such changes. In its 1997 White Paper, *Les enfants au cœur de nos choix*, the government of Quebec promised to create a *parental insurance* regime. This program was intended to meet one of the four goals of its new Family Policy, that is "to facilitate the balancing of parental and work responsibilities."[13] This idea involves a total redesign of parental leave, by de-linking it from Employment Insurance and basing it on earned income instead of time worked (Lepage and Moisan, 1998).[14]

---

9 From 1991 until 2000, parents could share 10 weeks of parental benefits. The maximum for any birth was 30 weeks, comprised of maternity, parental and sickness benefits. The combined maximum as of 2001 will be 50 weeks, with 35 weeks of parental benefits. Parents will also be able to work during these months, earning up to $50 per week or 25 percent of their weekly benefits, whichever is greater, without a reduction in their parental or maternity benefits.

10 If two parents shared parental leave, they both had a two-week waiting period before benefits were paid. As of 2001, only one waiting period will be imposed. Quebec covers this waiting period for mothers whose income is below $55,000 (see Appendix A, Table 3).

11 The number of hours required to qualify has been reduced from 700 hours to 600 hours for those claiming maternity and parental benefits.

12 Women's share of "own account" workers has risen from about 25 to 40 percent, while their share of the "employers" category has gone from 11 to nearly 25 percent in the last 30 years (Hughes, 1999).

13 For a description of Quebec's Family Policy in English, including its goals, see "Family Policy" at http://www.famille-enfance.gouv.qc.ca. See also Boisvert (2000).

14 In 1997, unpaid parental leave was also extended to its current 52 weeks.

Parental Insurance has not yet been implemented in Quebec but it is on its way. Because EI falls within the constitutional responsibility of the federal government, and Quebec has wanted Ottawa to transfer to the province a part of the Employment Insurance funds,[15] intergovernmental negotiations were engaged. They collapsed in March 1997 and have failed each time they have been tried since. In the face of these failures, the government in Quebec began to mobilize the population behind a "go-it-alone" solution.

The Parti Québécois promised a new regime in the 1998 election campaign and at the March 1999 opening of the National Assembly. In May 1999, consultations with employers, unions and family organizations began and, in the fall of 1999, consultations with employers led by the province brought agreement in principle. The February 2000 Youth Summit endorsed a "made in Quebec" plan. Included in the consensus were not only youth groups but also employers, unions, women's groups, and so on.

Quebec's Minister of State, Pauline Marois, tabled Bill 140 on June 6, 2000. Parental insurance will replace a significant portion of new parents' income, whether from a salary or a business. There is no need to meet the eligibility criteria of EI. Another innovation is paternity leave, available only to fathers. It would be of three or five week duration, depending on the payment option selected. The draft bill sets out two options for parents. They may elect to receive 40 weeks of leave (combining maternity, paternity and parental leave) at 75 percent replacement of the previous year's earnings, or 50 weeks at 70 percent replacement for the first 18 weeks and 55 percent for the rest, up to the maximum insurable earnings of $52,500.[16]

The other provinces have not chosen to follow Quebec in taking up the issue of paid parental leaves, but some have begun to innovate in the areas of *family leaves*, a form of absence from employment that recognizes ongoing needs throughout a child's life. This can be used when a child is sick, to meet with teachers, and so on. British Columbia, Quebec and New Brunswick offer the most *flexible* family leaves, permitting family members to use them for a wide variety of purposes.

As Box 1 in Appendix A documents, Saskatchewan is the province that has been most committed to *extending* family leave. The currently available 12 weeks can be used only for medical emergencies but the province is seeking to make the program more flexible. In 1998, the Task Force on Balancing Work and Family set up by the provincial Department of Labour identified the stress of juggling work and family as the number one problem facing employees. Saskatchewan has a higher than average female labour force participation rate (Vanier Institute, 2000: 81), but employers often lack knowledge or understanding of the needs of their workers (Saskatchewan Labour, 1998). Therefore, the province is considering amendments to the *Labour Standards Act* (see Box 1).

---

15 Quebec also wants Ottawa to recognize the savings it has generated since Quebec parents using $5 per day child care no longer can claim their federal Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED).

16 Adopting parents would have the right to 26 weeks at 75 percent replacement of the previous year's earnings or 32 weeks if they choose the second option. See http://www.mfe.gouv.qc.ca for English and French versions of Bill 140 as well as for the communiqués de presse of the ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, 6 June 2000 and 9 June 2000.

3.2 Tax Deductions for Parental and Non-parental Child Care

Meeting the costs of child care is one of the most difficult challenges that parents face. Some families choose to provide care themselves, usually by having one parent stay at home without earned income.

The tax regime provided a significant tax deduction to taxpayers with dependants when it was first created right after the First World War. While the deduction for dependent children was eliminated by Ottawa in the 1980s, the federal government and the provinces acknowledge the need to recognize non-participation in the paid labour force. In the past, social mores were such that women often refrained from seeking employment even when they had no young child to care for. Increasingly, however, adults under 65 who are not in the labour force are actively caring for their children or other family members. Therefore, the deduction for a non-earning spouse is one that recognizes the costs that families accept by choosing to provide their own child care and other services in support of the family (Krashinsky and Cleveland, 1999).

The tax regime also provides a deduction for those parents who choose non-parental care. At the same time that it introduced paid maternity leaves, the federal government added a Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) to the *Income Tax Act*, thereby allowing parents to partially cover one of the necessary costs of employment. Currently, parents can deduct a maximum of $7,000 of expenses for children from birth to age 7, and $4,000 for children aged 7 to 16.[17] In two-parent families, the parent with the lower income must claim the deduction. The caregiver must provide receipts, but there is no requirement that she or he must be licensed. Care provided by babysitters, nannies, and relatives can be claimed, as long as a receipt is issued.

The CCED is an important instrument to level the financial playing field for families, partially compensating them for the money they must spend *in order to work* (Krashinsky and Cleveland, 1999). The CCED does not cover all child care costs incurred in order to work (as the statistics on the cost of raising a child quoted above make clear), but it does help.

A few provinces also address the high costs of child care through the tax system. In 1998, Ontario instituted a Child Care Tax Credit that employs the same eligibility criteria as the CCED (see Appendix A, Box 2). The maximum credit is $400. It is available to families with children younger than 7 and with an income of less than $20,000. Quebec has had such a credit for a number of years, covering children from birth to age 16, up to a maximum of $3,000 per year. This credit is currently being phased out. Only parents who cannot gain access to a child care space at $5 per day, and who have receipted expenses, may use it.

17 The net benefit of this deduction depends on the marginal effective tax rate, which is a maximum of 55 percent.

3.3 Child Care Subsidies

Another way that all provinces have addressed the costs of child care is by paying subsidies to providers on behalf of low-income parents (see Appendix A, Table 5). In the 1960s and 1970s, as provinces modernized their social assistance programs, some of them treated caring for dependent children as a sufficient cause for lone parents with young children not to seek employment. For example, until 1996, lone mothers in Ontario were exempt from searching for work if they had children under 16 years of age.[18]

As we will see in the next section, social assistance regimes are banishing the assumption that caring for a child is a reason not to seek employment (Boychuk, 1998: 95-96).[19] Already over half of lone parents *are* in the labour force and, by definition, they do not have the option of having someone at home to care for the children.

Moreover, policy makers have long understood that many lone parents *want* a job in order to move out of the poverty to which even the most generous social assistance payments confines them.[20] Yet their earning capacity has always been below that of two-income or male-headed families.[21] Therefore, child care subsidies for parents "in need" became an important support provided by most provinces.

The design of the subsidies was the direct result of the shared-cost funding provisions embedded in the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP), which was established in 1966 and ended in 1996. In some cases, this program also provided employed persons with access to benefits covered under CAP, as a preventative measure.

Child care provides an excellent example of the ways in which CAP dollars were used to reduce the risk that persons would "fall into dependency unless granted aid" (Guest, 1985: 116). Child care subsidies could be paid in the name of the working poor and, in some provinces, they also reached middle-income families. This support would thereby allow working parents to remain in the labour force, while removing a major blockage to parents on social assistance from moving into paid employment. These subsidies continue to be a significant component of the support going to low-income parents, as provinces stress "employability" and remove exemptions from seeking employment that apply to lone parents (see Appendix A, Tables 5 and 7).

---

18 When Ontario Works was instituted in 1996, however, all social assistance recipients had to participate, including lone parents with children older than 6.

19 Nonetheless, certain of the structuring effects of such assumptions remain in patterns of labour force participation. Fully 69 percent of married women with children under 6 participate in the labour force, while 55 percent of lone-parent mothers with children under 6 are active in the labour force (Vanier Institute, 2000: 87).

20 In 1995, in all provinces, welfare incomes of families with children hovered at about 60 percent of the poverty line. A couple with two children had a welfare income between 20 and 30 percent of their employed counterparts, while single-parent families on social assistance with one child had an income generally less than half that of a comparable family in which the parent was employed (Boychuk, 1998: Figures A5 and A3).

21 In 1999, after taxes, the average family income in Canada was $45,605. Two-parent, two-earner families had an average family income of $52,007, while lone-parent families with a female head earned, on average, only $22,493.

Both Quebec and British Columbia have recently adopted another strategy for addressing the costs of child care. Beginning in September 1997, Quebec made a commitment to provide universally available low-cost child care, and began phasing in the program. As of September 2000, parents with children from birth to age 12 who attend a child care centre, family day care or after-school care program pay a flat rate of $5 per day for up to 10 hours of care per day. This rate also applies in for-profit *garderies* that have signed an agreement with the Ministry of Child and Family Welfare.[22]

The program also encourages parents on social assistance to have their children participate in the educational programs now provided by Early Childhood Centres and other care-providers. Whether or not they are employed or in training, parents on social assistance have 23.5 hours of free child care per week.[23] Parents in Quebec who are participating in employability programs also receive assistance for the costs of this care.

A second example comes from British Columbia. The provincial government recently announced an upper limit for child care fees for school-age children. As of January 2001, the cost of licensed before- and after-school child care will be capped at $7 per day during the school term and $14 per day during spring break, Christmas break, and on Professional Development Days. Establishing such limits is expected to save parents, on average, $1,100 per year per school-age child.[24] It will immediately affect the 19,000 school-age children using licensed facilities.[25] The promise is to extend the program to younger children in subsequent years, as funds become available.

CAP also permitted provinces to direct operating subsidies to non-profit centres serving a high proportion of children from low-income families. Not all provinces chose to develop such subsidies, however (see Appendix A, Table 6). More recently, under pressure from workers and from parents concerned about the quality of care, provinces have instituted wage enhancement grants, so child care centres would be able to raise their employees' salaries and, in some provinces, meet pay equity requirements. Rather than providing specific wage enhancement grants, some provinces are responding to union and worker pressure and putting more money for wages into the general child care budget. In spring 1999, for example, Quebec settled with the union representing child care workers. Wages will rise, on average, fully 38 percent, increasing the average child care worker's salary to $25,000, which will finally place it above the current Canadian average of $22,717 (Doherty, *et. al*, 2000). Manitoba announced in its Budget 2000 an increase of $9.1 million dollars for child care, to be used for increasing wages as well as adding spaces.

22 This is the translation of its name that the ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance uses.

23 The major reason the Quebec government took this decision was to give young children access to a socially and pedagogically stimulating environment (Gouvernement du Québec, 1997).

24 To arrive at this number, the government calculated that parents currently pay, on average, $12 on school days and $23 on school holidays.

25 A further 39,000 school-aged children are placed unlicensed child care, where these rates do not apply. See the news release at http://www.mhr.gov.bc/newsrel/nr0067.html.

3.4 Summary – The Family Responsibility Paradigm

This first paradigm makes parents responsible for virtually all decisions about their children's development, facilitates choice about how to balance work and family, and bases income transfers and many services on adults' relationship to the labour force. It generates programs that help balance work and family time (through, for example, tax deductions for a dependent spouse as well as maternity, parental and family leaves), and assists parents who need or want to combine employment and care for young children (through, for example, child care subsidies and the CCED). It marks a policy response to one of the major social changes of the last 50 years – high rates of female labour force participation. Indeed, one of the goals of such programs, focusing as they do on adults' needs, is to enhance gender equality. They have been designed so as to help women gain equality in the labour force and overcome barriers to participation.[26]

It is also a paradigm that assumes that parents are fully responsible for decisions about how much to "invest" in their children and about how to do so.[27] Therefore, it is built on the notion that public responsibility for young children is confined to helping parents with some child care expenses, supplementing the income of those whose earnings are too low to support the family, or tiding parents over during temporary withdrawals from the workplace. Only if parents fail completely in performing these responsibilities, and place their children at severe risk, will the state mobilize its child protection services.

In recent decades, this first paradigm has co-existed with another, in part because of the challenges arising from restructured labour forces and family life. These major economic and social changes have generated five challenges, listed in Figure 4.

26 Adequate child care was a principal recommendation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women (1970). The gender equality theme is still present, albeit more muted than in the 1970s. For example, the Minister of Women's Equality in British Columbia justified the cap on child care costs by saying that "before and after school care is a challenge for many households, especially for single-parent families, 83% are led by women." Similarly, the Minister of Child and Family Welfare in Quebec justified the introduction of the parental insurance legislation by saying, "the decision responds to long-standing claims made by women's groups" (Gouvernement du Québec, 2000).

27 This vision is reflected, for example, in the willingness of provinces to spend their child care subsidies on a wide variety of care arrangements, according to the choice of parents. For example, British Columbia allows its subsidies to go to commercial or non-profit centres, and to unlicensed care. Other provinces insist on licensed care, but not necessarily on any educational content.

Figure 4

New Challenges – Restructured Labour Forces and Family Life

1. Increasing stress for parents trying to balance work and family life – seen as both a "time crunch" and financial pressures.

2. A full-time job, even two jobs, may not be enough to keep the family out of poverty.

3. Throughout the 1990s, one of five Canadian children was poor and, therefore, more "at-risk" of poor developmental outcomes.

4. Being on social assistance means being poor, sometimes even into the next generation.

5. The boundaries between being "in" and "out" of work are blurred by the increase in atypical work, low-wages, subsidized jobs, training programs and so on.

Of these challenges, only the first could be adequately addressed by a more intensive application of the instruments of the first paradigm. As the next section details, efforts to respond to the other four challenges have provoked the appearance of another way of thinking, generating the Investing in Children Paradigm. Before examining it in detail, however, we will describe the ways in which Canadian governments have responded to these challenges by developing new governing arrangements as well as new policies and programs.

4.0 Signalling Change – New Machinery and New Programs

Alternative ways of thinking about the role of the "welfare diamond" of relationships among states, markets, communities and families do not burst onto the scene overnight. Nor do they emerge full-blown from any singular event. They are, instead, the consequence of many discrete events, decisions, and processes of rethinking and assessment. In this section, we describe three key signals that change was underway in the 1990s.

One of the *first* signs that a second paradigm was gestating was the major review of policies towards children and families undertaken by several governments. Out of most of these reviews came new thinking and innovative attention to child development and ways of delivering programs – in short, new governmental machinery. A *second* sign was the invention of the National Child Benefit so as to begin breaking down the "welfare wall," while the *third* sign involved using children's programs as the testing ground for new intergovernmental relations and forms of governance.

4.1 Integrating Services – Design and Delivery

Increasingly, governments seek to avoid fragmentation, repetition and overlap. Lack of knowledge is an impediment to good policy, to be banished by cooperation across departments and agencies, and among officials. For example, in 1991, Quebec asked the widely respected child psychologist Camil Bouchard to lead a task force that reported in *Québec fou de ses enfants* [*Quebec, Mad about its Children*]. This analysis informed subsequent thinking about family policy, child development, prevention, and limiting the risks of poverty. It helped shape the 1997 White Paper, *Les enfants au cœur de nos choix*, with its accent on an integrative approach to child development and income security for families.

Similarly, in 1993, Saskatchewan circulated the first *Children's Action Plan*, acknowledging the importance of strong support for children in their early years through prevention and early intervention. In 1994, Alberta published *Focus on Children: A Plan for Effective, Integrated Community Services for Children and Their Families*, while in 1998, Manitoba produced its *ChildrenFirst Plan*. Indeed, all provinces undertook a major study of the needs of children during the 1990s.

The task forces, inquiries, public consultations, and so on were not simply put on the shelf. They have resulted in significant reforms in the organization of services and in the search for more integrated collaboration across the range of agencies and departments "answerable" for children. There are several ways to achieve this, as described below.

- Alberta's *Focus on Children* defined "four pillars" of reform: community-based services, early intervention, improved services for Aboriginal children and families, and integrated services. To achieve these ends, the government began delivering services for families and children via regional Child and Family Services Authorities. Then, in 1998, the Child and Family Secretariat involved six ministries in synchronizing their services for children and taking shared responsibility for outcomes. Manitoba, between 1994 and 2000, also had an inter-sectoral agency to coordinate issues of children and youth, the Children and Youth Secretariat, before reverting back to the departmental format.

- Some provinces adopted another arrangement, creating new machinery but not integrating all services in it. British Columbia set up a Ministry of Children and Families in 1996. It shares responsibility for child care, however, with two other departments, the Ministries of Human Resources and of Health. Quebec set up a single Ministry of Child and Family Welfare, which in 1997 became responsible for income transfers on behalf of children as well as for child care. However, health and justice matters remain with their respective departments.

- Nova Scotia exemplifies a third style. Its Child and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) brings together at a single table the executive directors of Community Services, Health, Education, and Justice with the Youth Secretariat and Recreation Commission. It serves as a clearing-house for joint activities, as well as a mechanism of coordination. Saskatchewan's ADM Forum served as a model for CAYAC.

- Finally, Newfoundland and Labrador provides yet another way to integrate services for families and young children. In 1998, the province adopted the policy statement, *People, Partners and Prosperity: A Strategic Social Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*. This orienting document, and the Premier's Council on Social Development that was subsequently created, see programs for children as relevant to the capacity to meet the province's three identified goals: building on community and regional strengths; integrating social and economic development; and investing in people. At the same time, Regional Health and Community Service Boards provide integrated services from a range of provincial departments.

4.2 Breaching the "Welfare Wall" and Creating the National Child Benefit

The creation of the National Child Benefit (NCB) is an effort to respond directly to the challenges arising from the factors related to societal restructuring, listed in Figure 4 above. One factor was the choice made by Canadian governments, as those in many other countries, to move towards policies of "employability" for social assistance recipients, including lone parents. The second was the already high and escalating rate of children living in poverty, and the depth of that poverty.

For a number of decades, labour forces have been restructuring. Therefore, the assumptions that underpinned post-war social policies – that one was either *in* or *out* of the labour force – are becoming harder to sustain. If Unemployment Insurance was designed to meet the needs of those temporarily out of work, and social assistance provided assistance to those who could not work (because of child care responsibilities, disability, or long-term lack of employment), both programs have required serious rethinking in recent years.

The number of traditional jobs – that is, full-time employment with a long-term contract and earnings sufficient to keep oneself and one's family out of poverty – is shrinking, while part-time work, temporary work, self-employment on contract, and subsidized jobs are all on the rise. Patterns of employment are also in flux. Many who seek jobs can find none, and contingent work creates an ongoing cycle of people moving among employment statuses. They have a job, but then are unemployed or on social assistance. Other people blend one activity with another, combining school or parenting with part-time work. Programs such as internships or subsidized jobs mean that people work for little pay or at little cost to the employer receiving a subsidy for hiring them.

At the same time, governments have faced problems of deficit and debt, causing them to seek new and innovative ways of cutting spending or increasing the pay-off from social spending. Active labour market programs for training and retraining workers are as much a part of this reaction as is the imposition of more stringent conditions for accessing social assistance. Because lone parents (and especially lone mothers) make up a significant number of social assistance recipients, they have often been a key target group of employability programs, as we will see below.

A second contextual factor is the "child poverty rate." In 1989, the International Year of the Child, the House of Commons voted unanimously to end child poverty within a decade.[28] This has not been achieved. Using Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut-off (LICO),[29] in 1997, 14 percent of Canadian families lived in poverty. The number of Canadian children who are poor seems to have "stuck" at about one of every five, hovering around the 20 percent mark for several years. In the biggest cities, rates are even higher. If there are some signs that the rate might be declining, it still remains much higher than the rate that was the norm in the 1980s (McCarthy, 2000).

The problem of poverty is complex, and no easy ideological solutions are available. While it is true that families living on social assistance are always poor, the reverse is not true. A full-time job does not put an end to poverty. For policy-makers concerned about the well-being of Canadians, these gaps are doubly significant. They raise issues of equity for families today, but they are also threats to the future. Study after study has shown that children living in poverty are at higher risk of not meeting developmental milestones, and of experiencing school failure and other negative outcomes. Therefore, persistent poverty menaces the future, as well as the present.[30]

Fully 56 percent of female lone parents and 12 percent of two-parent families lived below the LICO in 1997.[31] Moreover, despite the solemn declaration of the House of Commons, between 1989 and 1997, the percentage of poor families in each of these two categories rose 3 percent. While the poverty rate for female-headed families is high, more poor children live with two parents than with only one. Over half of poor children (54 percent) live in two-parent families, and these two-parent families are the poorest, living on average $10,057 below the LICO. Another 40 percent live in lone-parent families headed by women, living on average $9,036 below the poverty line.[32]

The final detail in this poverty picture that is important to note is that many of these families are the "working poor" – they are not living on social assistance or unemployment benefits. Indeed, four of ten poor, working-age families have 40 or more weeks of employment annually. In 1996, 60 percent of couples with children living below the poverty line *earned* half their income in the labour market, while 22 percent of female-headed lone-parent families did the same. Yet they remained poor – and could not earn enough in the market to raise their family above the LICO.

28 On November 24, 1989, the three parties in the House of Commons pledged to work for the elimination of child poverty by the year 2000.

29 The LICO measures income relative to others in the same circumstances, that is, against those who face the same local cost-of-living and have the same size family. Because it is a relative measure, is not accepted by everyone as a measure of "poverty," even though it is very often interpreted that way because it describes those "in straightened economic circumstances" who are "substantially worse of than the average."

30 Based on a review of the NLSCY and other major data analyses, Stroick and Jenson (1999) were able to identify "adequate parental income" as one of the three conditions enabling positive child outcomes.

31 Lone-parent and two-parent "families" are defined as having at least one child under 18 living at home.

32 Unless otherwise indicated, the statistics in this paragraph and the next two are from the Vanier Institute (2000: 116-123).

Why? Because working 52 weeks at the *maximum* statutory minimum wage of $7 per hour in Vancouver, for example, leaves a lone mother with one child $7,210 *below* the poverty line, which is $21,770 in that community. Moreover, a two-parent family earning $12 an hour in *any* large city can still end up below the poverty line (Vanier Institute, 2000: 124).

As governments recognized these changes in the structures of poverty and market incomes, they came to realize the need to reform income transfer programs. The old assumptions did not match the new realities. First, employment alone, even full-time employment, is not sufficient to end family poverty, as it had been in the boom years after 1945. Moreover, parents have sometimes been reluctant to leave social assistance for a number of economically rational reasons. Given their likelihood to have low education and lack of employment skills, they might not be able to earn as much by working as they would receive on social assistance. In addition, they would probably lose valuable protections, including health benefits such as coverage for prescription drugs and dental care. As employed workers in low-paid and non-unionized jobs, they would have to purchase these items at high cost in the market, which could be a disincentive to seek employment. Such disincentives to employment have been termed the "welfare wall."

Governments also understood that good programs, as well as political will, could change the situation. One example comes from Canada's experience with policies towards the elderly. The one group that has seen its poverty rate *drop* significantly between 1980 and 1997 is seniors. The rate has gone from 19 percent – that is, the same poverty rate experienced by family's with children now – to 7 percent (Vanier Institute, 2000: 117). Everyone agrees that public policy that focused on public pensions and guaranteed incomes has caused this change.

A second example comes from other countries that have concentrated on preventing poverty among families with children. When only market incomes are considered, the vast majority of female-headed lone-parent households are poor everywhere. However, when incomes *after taxes and social transfers* are calculated, differences among countries appear. In the early 1990s, Norway reduced the percentage of poor lone-parent families from 61 percent *before* taxes and transfers to 16 percent *after* taxes and transfers, whereas the United States hardly cut the rate at all, simply going from 68 percent to 61 percent (Stroick and Jenson, 1999: 57). The lesson again is that politics matter. Taxes and social transfers are public policy instruments that make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged citizens.

Initially, Ottawa adopted a strategy of supplementing families' low incomes by redesigning family allowances and the tax deduction for dependent children. By 1993, these two programs had been transmuted into two others. The Child Tax Benefit (CTB) was available to 80 percent of families. The maximum amount ($1,020) went to those with an after-tax income of less than $25,921 and the CTB disappeared completely at an income of $66,721.[33] In addition, the federal government supplemented the income of the working poor, by paying a Working Income Supplement of $605 to families with an earned income between $3,075 and $25,921.

33 These are 1997 rates. The CTB reached "above average" families (e.g., in 1999, average family income was $45,605 after taxes) but also focussed on the poorest (e.g., female-headed lone-parent families, on average, had an after tax income of $22,493).

The federal income transfer program was changed in 1998 with the invention of the National Child Benefit, agreed to by all Canadian governments except Quebec (see Appendix A, Table 2). The principle underlying the NCB is sometimes described as "taking children off social assistance." The idea is that "by making more income and other benefits and services available outside the welfare system for families with children, many low-income families will find it easier to support their children while in the labour force" (Government of Canada, 2000). The NCB has two principal goals: to reduce the *depth* of child poverty and to promote attachment to the labour force by ensuring that parents are always better off by working. In other words, the NCB was designed to breach the welfare wall, as well as to redistribute income.[34]

Even though it is still focussed on low-income families, and with most money going to those whose after-tax income leaves them below (or near) the LICO poverty line, an important shift occurred. The Child Tax Benefit (CTB) and its Supplement form the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB). It *does not distinguish among sources of income*, as the Working Income Supplement did. Whether income is earned – or comes from Employment Insurance, child maintenance or social assistance – does not matter. The family, because it has a dependant child under 18, receives the same amount. *The result of this shift is that this important income transfer no longer pays attention to adults' relationships to the labour force, as the instruments used in the Family Responsibility Paradigm do. Instead, it depends only on the presence of children in the family*.

Governments are not indifferent to whether parents seek work, however. They are committed to fostering labour force participation. They continue to lower the age of the child whose care exempts single mothers on social assistance from seeking employment. In Manitoba, for example, "the assistance system ensured the *right* for deserving single mothers to *full* support until the child reached the age of majority" (Boychuk, 1998: 65), even into the 1980s. This is no longer the case (see Appendix A, Table 7). In all provinces, single parents on social assistance who have school-age children are considered employable, while in some cases, even the parents of infants are considered available for work or training. The range for the "age of exemption" is now from six months to six years.

The second way provinces exhibited attention to parental employment was in their stance with respect to the NCB. When the NCB was created, all but two provincial governments decided to *reduce* the income portion of social assistance, so that parents receiving social assistance would not have higher incomes as a result of receiving the NCB.

---

34 This is how the Canadian governments described their targeting of the "welfare wall" with the National Child Benefit in July 1999: "Families receiving social assistance often find it difficult to make the transition from welfare to work without losing benefits for their children. Compared to families on welfare, low-income working families may not be eligible for benefits and services provided through social assistance, such as free dental and prescription drug coverage. Wages earned through employment are not always enough to replace these lost benefits and pay increased employment costs, such as transportation, child care and work clothing. These barriers to employment form a 'welfare wall,' which prevents some families from leaving social assistance and makes it difficult for working families to obtain the supports they need for their children. The National Child Benefit is helping to ensure that low-income families are better off in jobs. The NCB provides additional financial supports for these families, along with benefits and services to help them stay in the workforce. The NCB has also begun to move child benefits out of the welfare system, so that when parents leave social assistance for work, they keep these benefits for their children." See http://socialunion.gc.ca/ncb/ncb_e19.html

New Brunswick and Newfoundland chose not to reduce social assistance benefits. All the other provinces, however, were criticised by anti-poverty advocates for refusing to allow the income of some of the poorest families to increase. One justification for this action was that the provinces would use the money saved by not paying a portion of social assistance for their "reinvestments" in services or other benefits. A second was the goal of inducing parents to seek work, since even a low-paying job, combined with the CCTB, might raise the family income, whereas staying on social assistance would not.

4.3 Using the NCA to Get to SUFA

The third sign of a paradigm shift came from the importance assigned to children in the intergovernmental relations surrounding the *Social Union Framework Agreement* (SUFA) of 1999 and it subsequent implementation.[35] Indeed, one might argue that developing an intergovernmental initiative on child and family benefits after 1995 was the testing ground for SUFA. When the federal Budget of 1995 unexpectedly announced the termination of CAP and the creation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST), the provinces found themselves in a vastly different world.

The regulations limiting the way the provinces spent transfers under CAP had been loosened over the years. Nonetheless, provincial actions were still shaped to a significant extent by the parameters of the program. The CHST was, in contrast, a virtual "no strings attached" transfer from Ottawa to the provincial capitals. The downside for those governments, however, was the major reduction in the amount of the transfers, as Ottawa cut its spending in order to reduce its deficit.

In response to this unilateral action by the federal government, and the profound effects it had, all provinces began to reconsider their options and to regroup their forces. The annual Premiers' meetings became occasions for developing a joint strategy to respond to Ottawa's positions, as well as to discuss each province's own plans for reforming social policy. Eventually, as the federal government began to see the finish line in its race against the deficit, all parties took up discussions of reforming social assistance and ways of addressing poverty. The eventual outcome – the National Child Benefit – was an initiative to both address the needs of poor children and to support their parents' labour market activity.

A second action developed in conjunction with SUFA that indicates the emergence of a new paradigm is the National Children's Agenda (NCA). The goal of this initiative is to foster a shared vision and common understanding of children's changing circumstances and needs. The NCA is also described as "in keeping with the spirit of the *Social Union Framework Agreement*, an on-going commitment among participants to improve cooperation among governments in order to make social programs more efficient and effective" (F-P-T Council, 2000: 2).

35 The *Social Union Framework Agreement*, known as SUFA, was signed in February 1999 and is in effect for three years. The government of Quebec has not signed the agreement, nor does it participate in the National Child Benefit (NCB) initiative.

The NCA process began in 1997.[36] The need for a common children's agenda was justified by "strong evidence, including scientific research, that what happens to children when they are very young shapes their health and well-being throughout their lifetime. Science has proven what we have intrinsically known all along – healthy children grow into healthy, successful adults, who will shape our future."[37]

In June 1999, the consultation document, *A National Children's Agenda – Developing a Shared Vision*, was published, setting out six actions to achieve the following four goals for children: good health; safety and security; success at learning; and social engagement and responsibility. It included a description of processes for coordinating governmental and nongovernmental efforts to set out how the policy actors would work together, to:

- Support the role of parents and strengthen families
- Enhance early childhood development
- Improve income security for families
- Provide early and continuous learning experiences
- Foster strong adolescent development, and
- Create supportive, safe and violence-free communities.[38]

Consultations involved individuals and groups across the country, including the main five Aboriginal organizations. These eventually led to the release of *Public Report* in June 2000, describing the findings of the year-long process.

A new intergovernmental agreement dated September 2000 marks a commitment of $2.2 billion dollars over five years to spending on early childhood initiatives for: the health of mothers and children; to improve parenting and family supports; to strengthen early child development, learning and care; and to strengthen community supports. These replicate, in other words, the commitments of the NCA.

These three indicators of change – new machinery, redesigned income transfers, and the NCA – lead us to the conclusion that a second paradigm is taking form alongside the Family Responsibility Paradigm described earlier. Section 5 presents the characteristics of this second paradigm and describes it operation in some detail.

36 The government of Quebec does not participate in the National Children's Agenda (NCA).

37 This is from the Backgrounder on the NCA, announced in the Speech from the Throne in 1997, which can be found at http://www.unionsociale.gc.ca/nca.

38 These goals and actions are reproduced in *Public Report* (2000: 6). For the original document, see *A National Children's Agenda – Developing a Shared Vision* (1999) or its Backgrounder. Documentation about the NCA is housed on the Social Union Web site at http://www.socialunion.gc.ca.

5.0 Investing in Children with a Range of Policy Instruments

The watchword of this paradigm is investment, as Box 2 documents. Its policy instruments developed are designed to express this commitment to investment, seeking to spend money where it is most needed and where it will generate a positive return. They do so by focusing in particular on two aspects of families' needs - income and services.

5.1 Investing in the Income Side

Provinces have identified four kinds of actions that can increase the revenue of low-income families, as shown in Figure 5. These instruments are all interconnected, but can be distinguished because they focus on four different ways of ensuring families have sufficient disposable income.

Figure 5

Policy Instruments for Investing in Children – The Income Side

1. Employability programs, to enable or force parents into the labour force. These may include supplementary benefits (such as child care or health benefits) to lower the welfare wall.

2. Income transfers to parents, such as child benefits or working income supplements.

3. Reduced taxes.

4. Mechanisms to force non-custodial parents to meet their responsibility for child maintenance by making support payments.

Provinces have programs to propel welfare recipients into the labour force (see Appendix A, Table 8, for example). Although they can be distinguished according to how punitive they are, as well as by how much compulsion they entail, there is consensus on two ideas. Priority should go to *employability* as an integral component of social assistance and, in order to trace the shortest route possible to employment, "any job is a good job" (Gorlick and Brethour, 1998: 6).

Employability programs, both those that are compulsory (usually termed "workfare") and those that are voluntary, cast their net much more widely than parents of young children. Indeed, common targets are youth and older, long-term unemployed persons. However, young women who are lone parents have also become one of the targeted categories. For example, when New Brunswick entered into a six-year agreement with Ottawa to establish NB-Works, lone parents were prime targets. In the first of three intake groups of 1,000 participants each, 72 percent were lone parents, 76 percent were women, and 80 percent were under 35 years of age (Milne, 1995: 140).[39]

39 Another example is the Self-Sufficiency Project, aimed at "making work pay," which was initiated by Human Resources Development Canada and implemented by the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation.

Several provinces also have special programs for lone parents. In Quebec, for example, lone parents on social assistance are encouraged to undertake post-secondary studies, while Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland have mounted pilot projects targeted explicitly at lone parents.[40]

Additionally, provinces[41] are using NCB reinvestment funds to *dismantle portions of the welfare wall* and to facilitate the transition to work. Of the areas of NCB reinvestment frequently chosen by provinces, the first three listed below directly address the welfare wall:

- ***Supplementary Health Benefits:*** Benefits provided for children in low-income working families may include coverage of prescription drugs, dental care and optical care (see Appendix A, Table 9).
- ***Child Care:*** More spaces and/or reduced child care costs are provided for low-income working families in employability programs.
- ***Child Benefits and Earned Income Supplements:*** Cash benefits are provided, regardless of the family's source of income, or earned income supplements are paid to low-income working families to help with the added costs of employment (see Appendix A, Tables 10 and 11).
- ***Early Childhood and Children-at-Risk Services*:** Early intervention programs are provided to help give children a healthy start in life and reduce their risk of achieving poor life outcomes. Early intervention programs include but are not limited to prenatal screening programs, nutrition programs, recreation programs, and community programs for disadvantaged youth.[42]

The first item on the list directly addresses a major parental concern, the loss of health benefits in the transition from social assistance to employment. Table 9 in Appendix A describes three ways that child health benefits are provided. In British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Quebec, low-income families and social assistance recipients retain the same health benefits, so there is no change when the "transition" from social assistance to employment occurs. In Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, there is a specific "transition period" in which employed parents retain the health benefits they had while on social assistance. Alberta, Ontario and Prince Edward Island continue to maintain a distinction between families on social assistance and other low-income families. These provinces have instituted programs that apply only to low-income families, offering different benefits to the two groups.

New Brunswick, along with British Columbia, were the provinces in which the program was implemented. It provides income transfer "top ups" to single parents who leave social assistance to take a full-time job (at 30 hours per week). It has been extensively evaluated, and several publications about it are available from HRDC at http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/publications.

40 The other major target group is youth, whether or not they are parents.

41 First Nations with responsibility for social assistance are also included in the NCB.

42 For the details of these programs, see the *National Child Benefit Reinvestment Report: 2000*, which is available at http://www.socialunion.gc.ca/NCB-2000/toceng-reinvest2000.html.

A second type of reinvestment addresses the child care needs of low-income parents as they enter the labour force. Most provinces have used their NCB funds to create more spaces in licensed child care centres or family day care settings. However, some are also using them to develop subsidies that can be used for any form of child care, including that provided by babysitters and relatives. New Brunswick, for example, has created a number of such subsidies as part of its reinvestment plans. In addition, some of the child care subsidies made available through employability programs can be used for unlicensed care. The notion behind this use of funds is that parents who are likely to have low-wage jobs or ones with atypical hours, such as those in the service sector, should identify as soon as possible a form of child care that will be sustainable and affordable.

The third effort to dismantle the welfare wall, used by some provinces for several years and adopted by others as part of their "reinvestment" plans, is to establish *provincial child benefits* and *working income supplements*. All provinces except Alberta, Ontario and Prince Edward Island pay a child benefit that is neutral as to the source of parental income (market, maintenance payments, Employment Insurance, and so on).

British Columbia established its Family Bonus in 1996 and Quebec remodeled a series of programs in 1997 to create its Family Allowance. New Brunswick established its Child Tax Benefit as a complement to the federal benefit (transformed into the CCTB), and then three provinces decided to use some of their NCB reinvestment funds to create a provincial child benefit (see Appendix A, Table 10).

Two provinces have had a "working income supplement" for over a decade (see Appendix A, Table 11). Manitoba created its Child Related Income Support Program (CRISP) in 1981 and Quebec followed suit, also in the 1980s, with its Parental Wage Assistance Program (APPORT: *Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail*). However, the other provinces that currently have such supplements fashioned them in conjunction with the establishment of the NCB. British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario introduced their programs in 1998, whereas New Brunswick did so in 1997.

Despite the fact that all but the three most eastern provinces have a working income supplement, the name should not fool one into assuming convergence. There are major differences in how they function, and in their generosity.[43] Most provinces treat the supplements simply as measures to encourage labour force participation and enhance the income of the poorest families. They are not available to families earning more than $20,000 to $22,000 (see Appendix A, Table 11).

43 A number of provinces also distinguish between single- and two-parent families in the amount of the supplement. Beginning in July 2000, Ontario has decided to provide a higher amount to single-parent families. Quebec has done so for a number of years.

Alberta's Family Employment Tax Credit works quite differently, however. It is accessed at a level of earned income significantly higher than the others. The family must have $6,500 in annual earned income *before* becoming eligible, whereas neighbouring Saskatchewan only demands that $1,500 be earned to qualify. Indeed, Alberta's threshold is almost twice as high as the $3,750 expected in British Columbia and New Brunswick alike. Moreover, families can continue to collect the supplement in Alberta until they earn more than $50,000. This, then, is a supplement to families with *market* incomes, but not necessarily a supplement designed to draw the poorest into the labour force.

Another type of program, intended to affect the revenue side of the family budget, targets *tax reductions* towards low-income families. Tax exemptions and deductions are traditional instruments used by governments to achieve forms of equity. Indeed, when the federal government instituted the first income tax in 1919, the "tax exemption for dependants" included wives and children.

Table 12 in Appendix A describes the variety of tax reductions currently available. In addition to sales tax credits for low-income families to offset the federal Goods and Services Tax, most provinces provide a sales tax credit for families with children. As well, in this era of tax cuts, several provinces have instituted tax reduction programs for families, although the amounts vary widely. For example, British Columbia provides a Surtax Reduction of only $50, while Manitoba gives a credit of $370 for the first child in a lone-parent family. Indeed, in the announcement of Manitoba's tax reductions for 2001, the government made a distinction between lone-parent and two-parent families, giving $250 for each child in two-parent families and for each child after the first in lone-parent families. This distinction among types of families in tax law is becoming increasingly common. We have seen the cases of Quebec and Ontario already, and the Sales Tax Credits in Saskatchewan also make this distinction.

Finally, in the last years, provinces have become much more active in ensuring the *financial responsibility of non-custodial parents*. Beginning in the 1980s, all provinces began to strengthen the machinery for enforcing the financial requirement that non-custodial parents support their children (Gorlick and Brethour, 1998: 11). These actions have taken two forms: those that focus on enforcement and those that seek to ensure the adequacy of family income.

As Table 13 in Appendix A documents, provinces are paying particular attention to obtaining maintenance from non-custodial parents whose children are living on social assistance. Therefore, most programs help custodial parents on social assistance to obtain a child support order. Enforcement has also been toughened up. Punishment for non-payment has become increasingly severe, with several provinces confiscating the drivers' licenses of those who do not pay support. The focus on social assistance parents remains in Prince Edward Island, which only offers parents on social assistance access to the more draconian enforcement regime. But eight provinces see the issue of enforcement more generally, promising to help *any* parents with an existing support order, and Quebec does not even require one. One result has been system-overload, as provincial civil servants have difficulty keeping up with requests for help in finding "deadbeat" parents who are not making child support payments.

Ottawa has also taken some initiative, with a number of measures for ensuring that levels of child maintenance are adequate, including provision of enforcement tools to the provinces for their efforts to ensure collection of support orders. While federal courts grant divorces, provinces have a range of services touching on divorce including maintenance payments by non-custodial parents. The federal *Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act* supports the provinces' efforts in this regard.

This role reflects a broader change in federal action in the area of divorce and support. In 1996, the federal government announced its intention to undertake reform in four areas, by: developing guidelines for child support levels which could be used across the country; revising the tax treatment of child support; increasing the allowance for child support of working parents in receipt of the Working Income Supplement; and contributing to improved enforcement of support orders (Hornick *et al*., 1999: 1).

In 1997, as part of this initiative, Ottawa provided a set of Federal Child Support Guidelines. These are rules for calculating the amount that a non-custodial parent should be contributing towards the maintenance of his or her child. All but two provinces have adopted these Guidelines (see Appendix A, Box 3). For its part, Alberta is considering adopting them and, in the meantime, distributes them to divorcing parents. Quebec has its own guidelines, which use a different model than that developed by Ottawa, but which are also compulsory. The aim of having and enforcing such Guidelines is to make very clear that non-custodial parents have financial responsibilities towards their children, and to eliminate inequities in divorce decisions that might leave custodial parents with insufficient income.

In order to help low-income divorcing or separating families, some provinces provide legal aid at various stages in the process, in part to ensure that parents arrive at agreements about levels of child support or to encourage support orders to be put into place (see Appendix A, Box 4). Not only are there wide variations in the conditions under which parents can access legal aid for divorce or separation, but there has also been a significant decrease in funding for legal aid in general since the early 1990s (Special Joint Committee, 1998). This means, then, that low-income families may be forced to exist in a legal limbo, unable to afford the costs involved in stabilizing their situations. Cutbacks in legal aid also partially account for the willingness of social service departments to help their clients to obtain court-ordered support payments since they might not be able to otherwise obtain them.[44]

44 In addition to these measures, the provinces offer family mediation programs for divorcing or separating families, which are described in Appendix A, Table 14. Moreover, the concept of family courts, that is, courts that exercise jurisdiction in relation to family-related laws, is developing in several jurisdictions across Canada (See Box 5, Appendix A). In Unified Family Courts, the court hears all family-related matters, whether these are covered by provincial or federal legislation. The federal government is encouraging the development of Unified Family Courts, which exist in several provinces and are being considered by a number of others, and is providing funding for judges.

Before leaving this area of income security, it is worth stepping back from the details in order to see the broader patterns. In recent years, policy-makers have engaged in a significant redesign of social assistance. In part, this is because they have come under pressure from neo-liberals who have always objected to social assistance as a program that creates "welfare dependency." As well, policy-makers have been influenced by their own analyses of the mismatch between programs designed for earlier times and the current realities of labour markets and wage structures, especially gaps between market earnings and income needs (see Figure 4 above).

This section has documented the creation of the NCB and the efforts by provinces to ensure that low-income families have adequate revenues, whether from market income, income transfers, maintenance payments, or a combination of these sources of income. Several general trends in this regard can be identified. One has clearly been to foster the labour force participation of *all* parents. Gone is the notion that parental child care can supplant employment in the case of lone parent families. Instead, all parents, at least when their children are school-aged, are required to seek employment and, in many cases, even when their children are much younger.

The motive behind this change has sometimes been ideological, that is, everyone "should" work. When that rationale dominates, there is sometimes a concomitant lack of attention to ensuring conditions for employment. Parents are simply required to "get on with it." In other cases, however, policy-makers are aware of the blockages that can exist to taking a job. These range from the absence of education and training, to a lack of child care or the loss of health protection, which comes from leaving social assistance for a low-paid job with no benefits. The policy inventories presented in Appendix A indicate that provinces have differed in their willingness to smooth the transition from welfare to work, and to provide support to families. Clearly, not all provinces are breaching the welfare wall with the same energy.

A second trend is to justify these programs as part of the "fight against child poverty." Policy communities recognize that *families living on social assistance will always be poor*. However, they also acknowledge that, in contrast to earlier decades, even a full-time job is not a guarantee of a successful climb above the poverty line. Therefore, many of the elements of the NCB – from the CCTB, to provincial child benefits and working income supplements – transfer income to poor and low-income families with children. They do so specifically in the name of the children, as we see time and again in the inventories in Appendix A: "child" or "children" appears frequently in the official name of many programs. The benefits are not available to adults who do not live with children under 18.

Both these trends have encountered the realities of current labour markets, however, as well as the issues around government finances and ideological disputes. Income supplements and child benefits will have to be higher than they currently are if families who depend on combining them with very low incomes are to be able to climb out of poverty. The stubbornness of the statistic that "one child in five is poor" underscores the complexity of the problem. Therefore, unless job prospects improve and parents can find better paying employment, overcoming poverty will require a greater commitment of public resources.

In part because of recognition of the immensity of the task involved in substantially reducing the incidence and depth of poverty, policies for families with young children also include the provision of *services*, for two quite simple reasons. First, there is no guarantee that an increase in family income will end up benefiting the children in the family. Second, markets may price many necessary services – including educational child care and programs for children at risk of developmental delays – out of the reach of low- and middle-income families. Therefore, the reinvestment plans of provincial governments, as well as funds from Ottawa, have provided new services to address the developmental needs of children. The result is a continuing discussion about the place of services in the program mix and an unwillingness to rely too much on cash transfers. We turn now to an examination of the "services" side of the Investing in Children Paradigm.

5.2 Investing in Services

Since the 19th century, provincial governments have had institutions responsible for caring for children whose parents did not provide a safe and nurturing environment. As noted previously, there have always been policy instruments for taking children into care when their parents did not behave responsibly, thereby putting the children "at risk." We will see that the vision of "investing in children" brings three modifications to these long-established practices.

First, there is a move towards providing integrated services and representing the needs of children, which blurs traditional distinctions between child protection and social services. Children's advocates, as well as new governmental machinery for delivering services, provide examples of this trend.

Second, the definition of "risk" has been substantially widened. Early childhood initiatives of all sorts seek to reduce the chances of children turning up in the child protection system (and, later, in the juvenile justice system), as well providing opportunities for all children to achieve their full potential in school and beyond.

Third, there is a willingness to justify innovative programs by appealing to a wide range of experts who played less of a role in earlier policy thinking. In the years when child welfare focused on "protection," the experts were social workers and front-line health professionals. Increasingly, we observe reliance on expertise from the fields of early childhood development and education, or even more often from the fields of population health and human development.

Towards More Integrated Services

Sadly, protection services have lately come under scrutiny because of several high profile examples of children dying while under surveillance by child protection services or because children confided to them were abused by the adults responsible for their care. Saskatchewan's *Action Plan for Children* grew out of one such tragedy.

As well, New Brunswick, Ontario and British Columbia have all recently conducted major reviews of their child protection services, finding that reduced funding associated with cutbacks and deficit fighting have contributed to the problem. Indeed, changes in the government machinery described in preceding sections followed at least in part from the notion that better integration would result in fewer children "falling through the cracks."

Another institution achieving increasing popularity and profile is the Children's Advocate (see Appendix A, Table 15). This office intervenes in cases of high conflict, including child protection matters. The institution is not new. Quebec and Ontario have had child advocates since the late 1970s. Ontario also has a Children's Lawyer, who is given wide responsibility, not only for child protection cases but also for custody and other divorce-related matters. Currently in Quebec, the protection of youth has been amalgamated with human rights protection in a single Human Rights Commission, which oversees child protection and attends to the rights of children more generally.

In contrast, in the four provinces that have more recently identified an advocate for children, the focus is somewhat different. They do not represent individual children in custody and access matters. Rather, they ensure that children receive the services to which they are entitled and that are appropriate for them. As well, the Children's Advocates in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia play an important educational and general advocacy role. Thus, the newer agencies have a dual responsibility – for public education about the needs of children and for representing individual children and their families in conflicts with government bodies charged with providing services.

Widening the Definition of "At Risk"

In line with this paradigm's emphasis on putting children first, there is also a movement to widen the definition of "at-risk" children. Going beyond traditional concerns about child protection, there is now a range of services for children at risk of developmental failures. These "early interventions" or prevention-focused actions are sometimes termed "early childhood initiatives." They are designed to identify and meet the developmental needs of children through special programs, very often in alliance with community-based non-profit groups. It is to these programs that new funds announced in September 2000 will go (see Appendix A, Table 2).

Based on the academic research on human development, as well as that conducted by sociologists and education specialists, knowledge about the interconnectedness of risk factors is emerging. These experts pay attention to not only the personal characteristics of children and parents (their age, preparation for parenting, physical and mental health, and so on) but also to the economic situation of families, and environmental or community conditions. Thus, poverty is a risk factor, but so is living in a disadvantaged community, because this too is often correlated with poorer health, developmental delays, and so on.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), organized by the Applied Research Branch of Human Resources Development Canada, provides data and analyses exposing the complexities of these interactions. In particular, its findings point to the importance of neighbourhood characteristics. A paper based on NLSCY data argues, for example, that "neighbourhoods do influence the school readiness of children … [and therefore the] resources within the community that are important for healthy development could be improved. These include: the availability of recreational spaces such as parks and community centres; and the accessibility and availability of programs and services such as mother-toddler programs, quality child care arrangements, and after-school programs."[45] In other words, adequate family income and skilled parenting is not enough. Services in communities, whether publicly or privately provided, are also essential.

Evidence-based research such as the NLSCY, as well as that appearing in traditional academic contexts, has profoundly influenced public policy-makers' thinking about child development. It has led to efforts to address multiple risk factors in an integrated way, as well as to a focus on prevention in the earliest years. This is a central component of the NCB. As the list of provincial reinvestments given previously reveals, early intervention programs to help give children a healthy start in life consume a major portion of the funds made available by reforming social assistance and instituting the NCB. Such programs all seek to help parents in their parenting. They provide extra support to parents who might be unable to nourish their children properly (even before birth), to those who may need parenting skills training, and when community supports and professionals (such as child care providers) might help relieve some of the stress felt by parents.

Innovating in Investments

Obviously, public policy has always focused on children's development to some extent. Public health measures were often initiated because of the recognition of the consequences of unhealthy environments on infant mortality. Early childhood educators have always sought to provide stimulating environments, including developmentally appropriate child care, to the children of the poor. The difference that can be discerned now, however, is one of emphasis. In the years after 1945, such programs were important but rarely at the centre of attention in any vision of societal well-being. Increasingly, in present day social investment states, children, particularly the youngest, have become "investment targets" and are identified as "good investments" for the future (Saint-Martin, 2000: 37ff.; Jenson, 2001).

The federal government has been active in this area, developing a number of such programs around health and community development (see Appendix A, Table 2). In response to the 1990 World Summit for Children, the federal government established Brighter Futures: Canada's Action Plan for Children and set up a Children's Bureau within Health Canada. The task was to ensure the effectiveness of federal policies and programs that affect children and to coordinate these activities across federal departments.

---

45 These quotes are from the *ARB Bulletin* (Fall 1999), which had a special issue on child development. The paper cited is by Dafna E. Kohen, Clyde Hertzman, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. See http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/publications.

As well, Canada ratified the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 1991 and introduced a Child Development Initiative in 1992 to respond to the needs of children at risk, with a $500 million investment over a five-year period. The initiative included funding community groups that were addressing the developmental needs of children in high-risk communities and in Aboriginal communities.

The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) was established by Health Canada in 1992. It has funded innovative prevention and early intervention programs for high-risk children under the age of six in selected communities across Canada. CAPC's focus is on prevention, with services ranging from education to intervention activities. As it says of itself, "Community Action encourages *early investment* in children so that they get a better start in life, are ready to start school, and so that their chances to participate fully in society as adults are enhanced."[46] Parent or family resource centres, child development centres, parenting education, and infant stimulation are the major areas of intervention. The target groups for CAPC programs are: children living in low-income families; children living in teen-parent families; children experiencing developmental delays or with social, emotional or behavioural problems; abused and neglected children; and people who have, or are likely to have, "at-risk" young children.

Managed through partnerships with groups in targeted communities, one of CAPC's key goals is to innovate in the area of coordinated programming. Projects funded under CAPC vary widely across the country, but many incorporate family resource centres as a dimension of their infrastructure. In Nova Scotia, for example, a key link in the province's own prevention-focused strategy for the early years is the network of CAPC-funded family resource centres, which have built on earlier experiments that were underway in the province before 1992.

A second important area of action for Ottawa is its Aboriginal Head Start programs for early childhood development. Each project supported by Health Canada focuses on preschool children and includes attention to culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social supports, parental involvement, and preschool projects. There are more than 100 Aboriginal Head Start project sites across the country, in urban and northern areas. Originally designed for off-reserve children in urban areas or northern communities, Head Start was extended to on-reserve children in 1997. This program is in addition to the 151 other CAPC projects that serve Aboriginal children and their families on and off reserves.

The federal government also is engaged in a range of other programs including, for example, the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program and the creation of Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. The latter, announced in the 1997 Speech from the Throne, are intended to enhance understanding of the health needs of children.

It is not possible to list all such programs. They are numerous and situated administratively in various departments of the government. What is noteworthy, however, is their level of experimentation and variability, as well as their relatively recent dates of creation.

46 Emphasis added. For details about CAPC, see the Health Canada Web site at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca.

The provinces have also been innovators and each offers a variety of programming, as consultation of the annual *National Child Benefit Reinvestment Reports* makes very clear. Each province uses its own funds as well as those coming from the reform of social assistance to support different kinds of initiatives. The result is that programs are far too numerous to detail here. Instead, three examples of different strategies for addressing the issue of early childhood initiatives can be presented for illustrative purposes.

- Saskatchewan provides an example of a *wide-net program* designed to capture a variety of discrete problems. It launched its Action Plan for Children in 1993, which "acknowledges the importance of strong support for children in their early years and promotes the development of prevention and early intervention services."[47] Over $53 million in funds were committed across a wide array of programs, including $18 million earmarked for the Saskatchewan Child Benefit and the Unemployment Supplement as part of an income security investment. These funds include grants to child care centres for services, programming and wage enhancement. The 1998-99 Plan also includes more than $4.5 million for the Department of Education (the largest single ticket item among direct program expenditures) to provide programs for "vulnerable children," including pre-kindergarten services and early intervention for three- and four-year-olds. In addition, money goes into health spending through Family Health benefits, nutrition programs, early skills development, and so on.

- New Brunswick provides an example of a more *narrowly focused program*, targeting by age based on a clear developmental vision. Its Early Childhood Initiatives are a province-wide, integrated service delivery system for prevention-focussed childhood services, targeting "priority" pre-school children and their families. Priority children are defined as those from the prenatal stage to five years of age whose development is at risk due to physical, intellectual or environmental factors (including socioeconomic factors). The primary goal of the Early Childhood Initiatives is to improve school readiness through health and educational initiatives. In addition to using the public health system to identify newborns who are at risk, all three-and-a-half-year-old children are assessed. Program goals include lowering infant mortality rates, raising birth weights, increasing breast feeding rates, and identifying physical problems related to hearing, sight and learning disabilities as early as possible.

- Quebec provides a third example. In addition to a range of specialized programs, it has put most of its investment into the *educational component of Early Childhood Centres and kindergarten*. The family policy developed in 1997 extended kindergarten for five-year-olds, and junior kindergarten for four-year-olds living in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, to a full day. After defining child care as a universal service, the province developed curricula for all age levels from infants to four-year-olds. The emphasis is a universal, rather than a targeted, strategy for meeting the developmental needs of children.

47 Saskatchewan's 1998-99 initiatives are described in its budget documents at http://www.gov.sask.ca.

A number of other provinces have begun to pay new attention to the need for quality child care, as part of the early intervention package. Nonetheless, none has as yet chosen to emphasize it as much as Quebec (although British Columbia promises to move in that direction). Indeed, some provinces have decided to expand child care spaces by providing support and encouragement for the development of unlicensed child care in their employability or reinvestment packages, a thrust that is antithetical to notions of the importance of a developmentally focussed approach to investing in children.

The result is that, despite the language of "investing in children," services remain fragmented and partial, with wide variety from one province to another. Head Start programs are producing positive results, but they are available only to Aboriginal children. The NCB imposes guidelines about reporting, but none about action and, as the annual reports indicate, choices are wide-ranging. Canada distinguishes itself from most other advanced industrial countries in two ways. Not only are its rates of child poverty high but it has the "distinction" of having very low rates of preschool education, despite everything we know about the advantages of such programs for child development and school readiness.[48]

Therefore, while governments now talk about investment and partnership, we can not be lulled in believing that the new vocabulary has wrought all the needed change. The Investing in Children Paradigm remains embryonic.

6.0 Conclusion – Towards a Better Mix?

This paper has presented two ways of thinking about children's needs. One paradigm, in place for a number of decades, describes parents as responsible, both for children's well-being and for the choices about how this is achieved. Public policies, to the extent they exist, aim to facilitate adults' decisions about labour force participation and child rearing, by supporting a range of options. Parents must use substantial amounts of their own resources to pursue their preferred options, however.

Income transfers (for example, social assistance), Employment Insurance, the tax regime, and services all take one key relationship into account – that of adults to the paid labour force. The tax regime and other policy instruments are used to allow families to choose full-time parental child care or to choose labour force participation. Adults' access to benefits and services depends on their labour force status. In the 1970s and 1980s, this paradigm also made room for gender equality, facilitating women's equal and equitable access to the labour force by helping to ensure that child care responsibilities would not hinder them.

48 In contrast, in France, Belgium and Italy, as well as in many other European countries, by the age of three, over 90 percent of children attend preschool programs provided by the public school system (Jenson and Sineau, 2001). Even the United States has more three, four and five year olds in preschool programs than does Canada (White, 2000: 87).

The instruments upon which this paradigm relies – such as employment leaves, tax deductions, and subsidies for child care costs – are still in use. The paradigm underpins a number of recent innovative actions including: the federal government's decision to substantially increase paid parental leaves within the Employment Insurance regime; Quebec's draft bill that would extend parental insurance to almost every new working mother as well as offer a separate paternity leave; and the extension of unpaid parental leave in most provinces from, for several, 17 or 18 weeks to 35 to 37 weeks and, in some cases, up to 52 weeks.

The notion that policies could simply facilitate parents' decision-making has become less sustainable in recent years, however. One set of reasons is found in the challenges of restructured labour forces and family life. Parents' options have narrowed. Most families need two salaries or two incomes in order to provide for themselves and their children. But licensed and developmentally focussed non-parental child care remains out of reach for many parents. As the CRRU (2000) recently said when writing about the decades of the 1990s, "data … suggest that child care, overall, was static (at best) or lost ground from an already poor position." Subsidies are harder to access and the supply of places has never kept up with the rising demand, even though several provinces have made substantial new commitments of funds. Few parents can afford the prices at the high end of the child care market.

In addition, in the 1990s, the labour market failed to provide sufficient market income. During the decade, the number of poor children living in working families rose abruptly, while the number of poor children overall also rose dramatically. Since 1989, the number of children living in poverty has increased by 42 percent across the country, and nearly doubled in Ontario (McCarthy, 2000).[49]

A second set of reasons that this paradigm was judged too limited came from the knowledge base of experts who focussed on the potential contribution of early childhood initiatives to the well-being of all children. They explained the advantages of extending preschool and health services for young children to promote healthy development and school readiness. The justifications emphasized both the need to lessen the risks associated with socioeconomic disadvantage and the knowledge that all children benefit from educational preschool programs.

Third, reassessments of income security began to focus on the unintended negative consequences associated with programs designed for other times, and in particular the creation of the "welfare wall." The end result of that rethinking was that practically everyone was designated employable, including lone parents caring for children. Incentive structures were altered to "make work pay" and facilitate the transition into work.

49 In its 1999 *Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada*, Campaign 2000 reported a 44 percent increase since 1989 in the number of children in working poor families, and stated that almost 30 percent of poor children have parents working full-time. See http://www.campaign2000.ca/national.htm.

Policy-makers and advocates may have referred to only one or perhaps two of the limits of the Family Responsibility Paradigm in making any particular case. However, all three sets of ideas eventually converged around the notion of "Investing in Children." We have designated this as a second paradigm, one that co-exists alongside the first. It is still under development and does not necessarily garner the support of everyone.[50]

This paradigm pays more attention to positive outcomes for children. All parents are assumed to be responsible for themselves and for earning their living by their own labour. Gone is the option of full-time parenting except for those who can afford it. But the paradigm also envisions a partnership with parents, making the community responsible for investing in children alongside parents.

How might we assess the present state of play, as these two paradigms currently exist beside each other? Is one better than another? Should the second replace the first, or should we fight to defend the old ways? Is it possible to retain the best of both, while eliminating the weak points of each?

Answers to these questions are difficult. They depend on a range of factors, including basic value preferences. The answers also depend on whether the "family" imagined is a two-parent upper-income family, or a two-parent or lone-parent low-income family. Therefore, one way to begin to unpack the complexity is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each paradigm. Then it should be possible to think about how to retain the best of each in a mixed model, rather than forcing a choice between them.

As Chart 1 indicates, each paradigm has strengths and weaknesses on each of the four dimensions analysed. If we examine them in detail, a possible mixed model begins to take shape.

Take the first dimension, *responsibility for children's well-being*. A weakness of the Family Responsibility Paradigm is that it leaves parents to their own resources too much. The Investing in Children Paradigm recognizes instead shared responsibility and is therefore attractive, *as long as sufficient public and community funds are devoted to services*. Without significant investments, however, the second paradigm is no stronger than the first.

Quite dangerous too is its potential weakness on this dimension. There is sometimes a danger here of "blaming the parents." When the partnership is not truly a partnership, parents may be unfairly targeted as "failures." Therefore, program design must recognize, as the first paradigm does, that parents have knowledge and that facilitating and empowering, rather than imposing, is the best direction. For example, programs such as CAPC and Aboriginal Head Start, which involve parents as partners, are better options here than are the compulsory "parenting courses" used by some provinces.

---

50 Some advocacy groups are particularly suspicious that their criticisms of the limits of the first paradigm are not being addressed by this new enthusiasm for talking about "investing" but still not spending enough.

Chart 1. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Two Paradigms

Dimension	The Family Responsibility Paradigm		Investing in Children Paradigm	
	Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses
Responsibility for children's well-being	Recognizes that parents' are responsible for their children's well-being	Parents' are left to their own resources and must pay high costs. Insufficient services. Most families must pay high market prices or absorb costs themselves.	Responsibility is shared in partnership with the community and the state. Parents can count on help and support in their parenting.	A risk of disempowering some parents and their own knowledge about child rearing.
Logic of access to benefits	Focussed on adults' relationship to the labour force, it provides some recognition of the need to promote gender equality in the labour force .	Some disincentives created to social assistance recipients entering the paid labour force (i.e., the "welfare wall").	Access depends on living with a child.	Adults' needs become less visible. Those without children have few claims on benefits and gender equality goals are less visible.
Position on labour force participation	Policies support a range of options for labour force participation. Full-time parental child care and non-parental child care are both supported by tax deductions and other public policies.	Families must absorb almost all the costs of choosing full-time parental child care. Quite limited leaves and little real salary replacement. Parents choosing non-parental child care face high costs as well.	Some support for helping low-income families with little education and few employment skills earn market income.	Only well-off families who can afford to assume all the costs of non-participation may choose parental child care. Low-income families and lone parents have very few options.
Access to non-parental child care	Recognizes the need to provide subsidies and tax deductions to help parents cover some of the costs incurred by working.	Insufficient places are available in high quality child care. Parents are not really able to choose because of high prices.	More emphasis on developmentally appropriate and high quality programs for all children.	Insufficient spaces, often targeted to children classified as "at-risk." Governments may ignore developmental child care, when they design early childhood initiatives.

The *logic of access to benefits* in the Investing in Children Paradigm has advantages for addressing children's needs and, if benefit rates continue to rise with new investments (in the CCTB, for example), it could make a significant dent in child poverty rates. Also, the way that Ottawa pays its portion of the NCB, as well as provincial reinvestments, have helped to dismantle some of the welfare wall built as an unintended effect of the earlier paradigm. Nonetheless, the new paradigm is not without its own weaknesses. In particular, it risks rendering invisible the needs of adults without children under 18. Their needs cannot be addressed within the discourse of "investing in children." Nor is there much space for the still unfulfilled agenda of gender equality. Women's needs have taken second place to children's. Therefore, better attention to *adults* and their needs is needed in a good policy mix.

On the third dimension, *position on labour force participation*, the change has been definitive. The principles of the first paradigm have been banished. The general assumption is that social policy will promote employability and that children will be better off when their parents are employed. However, it is worth noting that this shift, despite some advantages in terms of government spending and self-sufficiency, also has its downside. In particular, the heavy burden imposed on lone parents for assuming all parenting and all earning responsibilities is too often discounted. When investments in services are not truly forthcoming, lone parents find themselves tightly squeezed. A similar financial and time crunch exists for low-income families unless services for reliable and affordable child care help them balance work and family. So again, in order for the paradigm to deliver on its promise and promote equity, spending on services must be adequate.

The other downside of this dimension of the new paradigm has generated a good deal of public debate. This is the complaint that families choosing full-time parental care and not using the CCED do not have enough recognition in the tax system. While they do receive a significant tax advantage if one spouse has very low or no income, families in which one spouse works at home (and, in some circumstances, the self-employed) cannot claim the tax deduction for child care expenses. While the solution is not to transform the CCED into something else (and thereby ignore the fact that *parents do have expenses in order to work*), there is an argument for assessing its functioning in light of the realities of restructured labour markets.

The greatest contribution potential of the Investing-in-Children paradigm is with respect to the fourth dimension, *access to non-parental child care*. The older paradigm leaves decisions about the quality of care to parents, often forcing them to choose a lesser quality care because they do not have the money to do otherwise. The notion of "putting children at the heart of our choices" and making necessary investments can avoid this problem. Such thinking puts good quality non-parental child care – as well as family resource centres and health initiatives – near the top of any agenda. Science shows the contribution that preschool education can make to positive outcomes for children and parents understand its contribution to well-being. Therefore, this paradigm holds the potential – if governments choose to act – to make strides towards a real investment that would address the long-standing "distinction" in Canadian policies for children, that rates of preschool attendance are very low. In current labour markets and with social programs that presume virtually all parents should be employed, backsliding on this dimension would put the whole notion of "investing in children" at risk.

Appendix A

Policy Inventory Tables and Boxes

Table 1

Provincial Ministries and Councils Directly Responsible for Child and Family Issues

Province	Ministries and councils directly responsible for child and family issues
British Columbia	Ministry of Children and Families (1996) British Columbia Council for Families (1977) Children's Commission (1996)
Alberta	Children's Services (1999) Child and Family Services Secretariat (1998)
Saskatchewan	Council of Children (1994)
Manitoba	Department of Family Services and Housing (2000)
Ontario	Children's Secretariat (1998) Minister Responsible for Children (1998)
Quebec	Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (1997) Conseil de la Famille et de l'Enfance (1988)
New Brunswick	Department of Family and Community Services (2000)

Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 2

An Overview of Federal Programs for Children in Canada, 2000

Child Benefits

- The National Child Benefit (NCB), launched in 1998, provides the framework for child benefits. It is composed of: (1) the basic Canada Child Tax Benefit, (2) a National Child Benefit Supplement, and (3) provincial reinvestment commitments.
- The federal government provides the basic Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) of $1,104 per child under 18, plus $219 per child under 7 if the Child Care Expense Deduction is not claimed (see Tax Deductions below).[1] It also pays the National Child Benefit Supplement to low-income families at $977 for one child and $1,748 for two children. The basic benefit begins to be reduced at $30,004 and disappears at $74,000 for families with one or two children. The low-income supplement begins to be reduced at $21,214 and disappears at $30,004. Alberta and Quebec have their own payment schedule for the CCTB.
- Revenue Canada administers the following provincial and territorial child benefit and credit programs: BC Family Bonus, Alberta Family Employment Tax Credit, Saskatchewan Child Benefit, New Brunswick Child Tax Benefit, Nova Scotia Child Benefit, Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit, Yukon Child Benefit, Northwest Territories Child Benefit, and Nunavut Child Benefit.
- A goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) credit is available for parents with children under 19 and/or for married people with annual incomes less than $35,980 for one child family, $38,080 for two children and $40,180 for three children. Recipients have to apply for the credit each year.

Tax Deductions to Cover Some of the Costs of Employment

- Since 1972, the federal government has provided a Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED) to employed parents. Costs for child care for which receipts are provided can be deducted up to maximum of $7,000 for a child under 7, and up to $4,000 for children aged 7 to 16. In two-parent families, the deduction must be claimed by the parent with the lower income. The CCED can be used for both formal regulated child care or unregulated care, as long as receipts are issued.

Paid Maternity and Parental Leaves

- Paid maternity and parental leaves are available for parents covered by Employment Insurance. To be eligible, parents have to have worked a minimum of 700 hours in the last 52 weeks.[2] Birth mothers are entitled to 15 weeks of paid leave, and either parent may take an additional 10 weeks. Parents can also get 15 weeks of sickness benefits in addition to maternity or parental benefits. Benefits are 55 percent of insurable earnings. Recipients earning more than $48,750 must pay back a portion of the Employment Insurance benefit. The maximum supplement is $413 per week. The first two weeks of leave are not covered by these benefits.
- Employment Insurance now covers part-time workers. Therefore, they may also be eligible for maternity and parental benefits if they have worked enough hours to qualify for them.
- Employment Insurance provides a Family Supplement for low-income families to raise the replacement level of lost income. Families with net incomes below $20,921 receive the full Family Supplement and families with net incomes between $20,921 and $25,921 receive a partial Family Supplement. The maximum is $413 per week.

Programs for Child Well-being and Healthy Development

- The Aboriginal Head Start Initiative improves the pre-school experience of Aboriginal children, and works with their parents in urban settings, northern communities, and on reserves. The program includes attention to culture and language, education, health promotion, nutrition, social supports, parental involvement and preschool projects. There are more than 100 Aboriginal Head Start project sites across the country.
- The Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) provides long-term funding to community groups to establish and deliver services that respond to the developmental needs of children from birth to 6 years of age who are at-risk (children living in low-income families, teen-parent families, those at risk of experiencing developmental delays, or social, emotional or behavioural problems, and those who are abused or neglected). CAPC funds prevention and early intervention programs and delivers services through parent or family resource centres, child development centres, providing parenting education and infant stimulation in selected communities.
- The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program is a comprehensive community-based program that supports pregnant women who face conditions of risk that threaten their health and the development of their babies. The program provides resources for community-based groups to offer support such as nutrition, knowledge and education, social support, and assistance to access to services. The program is delivered through Health Canada regional offices, and managed jointly by the federal government and provincial-territorial governments.

1 The Canada Child Tax Benefit will be increased by $2.5 billion a year by 2004, bringing to more than $9 billion its annual support for low- and middle-income families with children. This will mean a maximum benefit of $2,400 for a family's first child and $2,200 for a second child.

2 This requirement will be reduced to 600 hours of insurable employment for parents of a child born or placed in their care for adoption on or after December 31, 2000.

Table 2 (cont'd)

National Children's Agenda

- The National Children's Agenda, in keeping with the spirit of the *Social Union Framework Agreement*, is an ongoing commitment among participating governments to improve cooperation among governments in order to make social programs more efficient and effective. In December 1997, Canada's First Ministers asked the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal to engage the public in developing a shared vision for enhancing the well-being of Canada's children. The Government of Quebec agrees with the objectives of the National Children's Agenda, but has decided not to participate in its development.
- In collaboration with Canada's five national Aboriginal organizations, the Council published a document entitled *A National Children's Agenda – Developing A Shared Vision.* This document invited people to discuss common values and goals for children, and to consider a vision that reflects Canadians beliefs about children and a commitment to their well-being. In addition, the document included an Aboriginal perspective on children's issues.
- A supplementary document, *A National Children's Agenda – Measuring Child Well-being and Monitoring Progress*, promoted discussion about how governments and Canadians can measure children's progress and share information about how to improve children's well-being.
- In May 1999, governments launched a dialogue with citizens across the country to gather comments and ideas about the draft vision, as set out in the two dialogue documents. The *Public Report on the Public Dialogue on the National Children's Agenda – Developing a Shared Vision* (2000) provides an overview of the comments and ideas provided by organizations and citizens, including children and youth, from across Canada. It includes an amended vision statement.
- In October 2000, the Federal government announced the establishment of five Centres of Excellence for Children's Well-Being. The vision of these Centres of Excellence is to enhance the understanding of the physical and mental health needs of children and the critical factors required for healthy child development.

Federal Transfers to Provinces and Territories

- In 1996, the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) was introduced to replace Established Programs Financing (EPF) and the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). The CHST provides cash and tax transfers that can be used for health, post-secondary education and social assistance/services.
- Provincial cash and tax transfers were reduced by $3 billion in 1996-97 and $4 billion in 1997-98. In 1999, the federal government announced increased CHST funding of $11.5 billion over 5 years ($2.5 billion for 2000). In 2000, $30.8 billion was transferred to the provinces and territories.
- The 1999 Budget introduced measures to eliminate disparities among provinces in per capita CHST entitlement (cash transfers plus tax transfers). By 2001-02, all provinces and territories will receive the same amount on a per capita basis.

Child Custody and Child Support

- On May 1, 1997, new laws respecting child support came into force, including *Federal Child Support Guidelines* and additional federal enforcement measures to help the provinces and territories ensure that family support obligations are respected.
- The *Federal Child Support Guidelines* consist of a set of rules and tables for calculating the amount of support that a non-custodial parent should contribute towards his or her children, so as to make the setting of the amount of support fair, predictable and consistent.
- All but two provinces have adopted these *Guidelines*. For its part, Alberta is considering adopting them and, in the meantime, distributes the *Guidelines* to divorcing parents. Quebec has its own guidelines, which use a different model than that developed by Ottawa, but which are also compulsory.
- The federal government has provided enforcement tools to the provinces through the Department of Justice Canada's *Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act* (FOAEA) in cases where there is failure to comply with these family support orders. The Department of Justice Canada has established the FOAEA Service to implement the tracing, garnishment, and license denial provisions of the FOAEA.

Source: Relevant federal Web sites.

Table 3

Unpaid Maternity Leave

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*Pregnancy Leave*	*Maternity Leave*[1]	*Maternity Leave*	*Maternity Leave*	*Pregnancy Leave*
• Department responsible for policy	Labour	Human Resources and Employment	Labour	Labour	Labour
• Administrative responsibility	*Employment Standards Act*	*Employment Standards Code*	*Labour Standards Act*	*Employment Standards Code*	*Employment Standards Act*
• Eligibility	Pregnant women. No minimum previous employment.	Pregnant women. Must be continuously employed with same employer for at least 12 months.	Pregnant women. Must be in the employment of their employer for a total of 20 weeks of the 52 weeks preceding the day on which the requested leave is to commence.	Pregnant women employed by the same employer for at least 7 months.	Pregnant women. Must be on the job at least 13 weeks before due date.
• Benefits	17 weeks	18 weeks	18 weeks	17 weeks	17 weeks
• Start time	May start no earlier than 11 weeks before expected due date.	At least 6 weeks must be taken after delivery.	Commencing at any time during the period 12 weeks immediately preceding the due date.	May begin no earlier than 17 weeks before the due date.	Can begin at the time of a live birth even if more than 17 weeks before due date.
• Other benefits	May end no earlier than 6 weeks after delivery (unless employee requests it). An additional 6 weeks may be taken after delivery, on doctor's certification.	An additional 3 weeks may be taken after delivery, on doctor's certification.	An additional 6 weeks may be taken on doctor's certification.	Extension is up to employer and employee agreement.	Duration is 17 weeks if eligible for parental leave. If not eligible for parental leave, 6 weeks may be taken after delivery, even if this extends the pregnancy leave beyond 17 weeks.[2]

1 In December 2000, the government announced its intention to increase the guaranteed employment leave provisions for parents under the *Employment Standards Code* and appointed a committee to consult with Albertans on the length of leave.

2 This provision may not be in force. A new program was announced in December 2000, but full details were not available when this paper went to press.

Table 3 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Maternity Leave*[3]	*Maternity Leave*	*Pregnancy Leave*	*Maternity Leave*	*Pregnancy Leave*
• Department responsible for policy	Labour	Training and Employment Development	Environment and Labour	Community and Cultural Affairs	Labour
• Administrative responsibility	*Labour Standards Act* (la *Loi sur les normes du travail*)	*Employment Standards Act*	*Labour Standards Code*	*Employment Standards Act*	*Labour Standards Act*
• Eligibility	Pregnant women.	Pregnant women.	Pregnant woman employed by same employer for at least one year.	Pregnant woman employed by the same employer for 20 continuous weeks.	Pregnant woman employed by the same employer for at least 20 weeks.
• Benefits	18 weeks	17 weeks	17 weeks	17 weeks	17 weeks
• Start time	Can begin any time up to 16 weeks before due date.	May begin up to 11 weeks before due date.	May begin no earlier than 16 weeks before the due date.	May begin up to 11 weeks before due date.	May begin no earlier than 17 weeks before the due date.
• Other benefits					The employee is entitled to 6 weeks leave after a still-birth or miscarriage.[4]

3 Quebec has a maternity allowance called PRALMA (*programme complémentaire d'allocation de maternité*). It is a flat rate one-time payment of $360, paid to new mothers whose family income is under $55,000 and who are eligible to receive a maternity benefit through Employment Insurance. It is intended to top-up that benefit, covering the two weeks not covered by Employment Insurance.

4 This provision may not be in force. A new program was announced in December 2000, but full details were not available when this paper went to press.

Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 4

Unpaid Parental Leave

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*Parental Leave*	*No Program*[1]	*Parental Leave*	*Parental Leave*	*Parental Leave*
• Department responsible for policy	Labour		Labour	Labour	Labour
• Administrative responsibility	*Employment Standards Act*		*Labour Standards Act*	*Employment Standards Code*	*Employment Standards Act*
• Eligibility	New parents (mothers, fathers, birth and adopting).		Birth parents, primary caregiver, adoptive parent.	New parents (birth or adopting) who have worked 7 continuous months with same employer.	New parents (mothers, fathers, birth and adopting). Includes a person who is in a relationship of some permanence with a parent of a child, and who intends to treat the child as his/her own.
• Benefits	35 weeks if pregnancy leave is taken; 37 weeks if pregnancy leave is not taken. If the child has a physical, psychological or emotional condition, parental leave can be extended by up to 5 weeks.		12 weeks for parental leave; 18 weeks for adoption	37 weeks	35 weeks if pregnancy leave is taken; 37 weeks if pregnancy leave is not taken.
	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave, unless employer and employee agree otherwise.		Birth mothers and adopting parents have to submit their application at least 4 weeks before the end of their maternity or adoptive leaves.	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave.	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave, unless the child has not yet come into the custody, care and control of the parent for the first time.
	Fathers and adopting parents must take it within 52 weeks of the child's arrival.			Fathers and adopting parents must take it within 52 weeks of the child's arrival.	For fathers and adopting or other parents, parental leave may begin not more than 35 weeks after the child is born or comes into their custody, care and control for the first time.[2]
				Return to same or equivalent job.	Seniority accumulates. Return to same job (usually).[3]

1 While parental leave is not available in Alberta, adoptive parents with at least 12 months of seniority are entitled to 8 weeks of leave. If both parents work for the same employer, only one parent may take the leave. In December 2000, the government announced its intention to increase the guaranteed employment leave provisions for parents under the *Employment Standards Code* and appointed a committee to consult with Albertans on the length of leave.

2 This provision may not be in force. A new program was announced in December 2000, but full details were not available when this paper went to press.

3 The period of an employee's pregnancy or parental leave is included in any calculation of his/her length of employment (whether or not it is active employment), length of service (whether or not it is active service), or seniority. The employee is reinstated to the position most recently held with the employer, if it still exists, or to a comparable position, if it does not.

Table 4 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Parental Leave (congé parental)*	*Child Care Leave*	*Parental Leave*	*Parental Leave*	*Parental Leave*
• Department responsible for policy	Labour	Training and Employment Development	Environment and Labour	Community and Cultural Affairs	Labour
• Administrative responsibility	*Labour Standards Act* (la *Loi sur les normes du travail*)	*Employment Standards Act*	*Labour Standards Code*	*Employment Standards Act*	*Labour Standards Act*
• Eligibility	New parents (mothers, fathers, birth and adopting).	New parents (mothers, fathers, birth and adopting).	A parent (birth or adopting) who has been employed by the same employer for one year.	New parents (birth or adopting) who have worked 20 continuous weeks with same employer.	New parents (birth or adopting) who have been with the same employer for at least 20 weeks.
• Benefits	52 weeks	37 weeks	52 weeks	35 weeks for birth parents and 52 weeks for adoptive parents	35 weeks
	The 52 weeks must be continuous, but may be taken anytime within 70 weeks of the arrival of the child.	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave.	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave. The combined pregnancy and parental leaves are limited to 52 weeks.	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave.	Birth mothers must take it immediately after pregnancy leave.
		Fathers and adopting parents must take it within 52 weeks of the child's arrival.	Fathers and adopting parents must take it within 52 weeks of the child's arrival.	Fathers and adopting parents can take it within 52 weeks of the child's arrival.	Must begin within 35 weeks of the child's arrival.
	Seniority accumulates. For leaves of less than 12 weeks, same job guaranteed; for more than 12 weeks, similar job.	Seniority accumulates. Return to same or equivalent job.	Return to same or equivalent job. Seniority accumulates.	Return to same or equivalent job. Seniority accumulates.	Return to same or equivalent job. Seniority accumulates.

Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 5

Subsidy for Low-income Parents' Child Care Costs, Paid Directly to Service Providers

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*Child Care Subsidy*	*Child Care Subsidy*	*Child Day Care Subsidy*	*Child Day Care Subsidy*	*Child Care Fee Subsidy*
• Department responsible for policy	Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security	Children's Services	Department of Social Services	Family Services and Housing	Ministry of Community and Social Services
• Administrative responsibility	Child Care Branch	Regional Child and Family Services Authority	Income Security Programs Division	Child and Family Services	Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, District Social Services Administration Boards, and Native Bands.
• Eligibility	Low-income parents at work, attending school or in training, actively seeking work or in medical treatment.	Low-income parents who need at least 50 hours of child care per month. Parents must be employed, looking for work, in school or training, with a child under 7 and not yet in Grade 1.	Low-income parents who need at least 36 hours of child care per month. Parents must be employed, looking for work, in school or training.	Parents who are employed, seeking employment, in training or attending school, those with a medical need and those whose family or child has a special need.	Low-income parents and Ontario Works participants.
• Benefits	Subsidy may be directed to arrangement of choice (licensed or not, preschool, out of school, in home, out of home).	Subsidy may be directed to licensed day care centres or approved family day homes.	Subsidy may be directed to licensed child day care centres and licensed family child care homes.	Paid to licensed facilities on behalf of eligible families.	Subsidy may be directed to nonprofit or for-profit service providers (licensed child care centres and private home day care agencies).
• Tests	Income tested	Income tested	Income tested	Income tested	Needs tested
• Amount of subsidy[1]	A maximum subsidy is set. Parents pay the difference.	A maximum subsidy is set. Parents pay the difference.	Up to 90 percent of actual fee. Parents pay the difference.	A maximum subsidy exists. Families may receive part or full subsidy.	Up to 100 percent of actual fee, but municipalities may set other limits.

1 Subsidies cover school-aged children to some extent, although the age range covered may vary by province. The subsidy levels also vary by age and type of care. For details, see Childcare Resource and Research Unit (1999).

Table 5 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Subsidy for Child Care*[2]	*Day Care Assistance Program*	*Day Care Subsidy*	*Child Care Benefit*	*Child Care Subsidy*
• Department responsible for policy	Ministry of the Family and Children	Department of Family and Community Services	Community Services	Health and Social Services	Health and Community Services
• Administrative responsibility			Child Care and Early Intervention Services	Child, Family and Community Services	Health and Community Services
• Eligibility	Available only if child care at $5 a day is not available. Low-income parents who are employed, enrolled in training or education, seeking work, or referred by a social agency.	Low-income parents who are working, attending school, undergoing medical treatment or disabled.	Parents must be employed, seeking work, in training or attending school, in medical treatment or have a child with special needs.	Low-income parents.	Working parents or social assistance recipients, if children attend child care for child development purposes.
• Benefits	Subsidy may be directed to licensed providers, both nonprofit (centres and family day care) and for-profit. Some licensed providers may not be eligible for subsidies.	Subsidy may be directed to regulated nonprofit or for-profit child care centres or community day care homes (family day care).	Only registered centres (nonprofit centre in community-based organizations) and nonprofit family day care agencies may receive subsidies.	All licensed nonprofit or for-profit child care centres are eligible.	Any licensed nonprofit or for-profit child care centre.
• Tests	Income tested	Needs tested	Income tested	Income or needs tested	Income tested
• Amount of subsidy[3]	Up to 100 percent of actual fee.	Subsidy on sliding scale based on family income and number of children attending day care.	Parents pay the difference between maximum subsidy and actual fees.	Maxima to subsidies exist.	Parents pay the difference between the subsidy and actual fees.

2 *Programme d'exonération et d'aide financière pour la garde des enfants*. Quebec's subsidy program is being phased out. In September 2000, all preschool children will be eligible for $5 per day spaces, and the program will no longer be available to their parents.

3 Subsidies cover school-aged children to some extent, although the age range covered may vary by province. The subsidy levels also vary by age and type of care. For details, see Childhood Resource and Research Unit (1999).

Source: Adapted from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (1999), *Child Care in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 1998*, Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto. All data cited are from the June 1999 draft report. Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 6

Subsidies Available to Child Care Providers

Key: ✓ = Program exists in that province.
X = Program does not exist in that province.

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Individual subsidies	✓	✓	✓	✓[1]	✓
Operating subsidies	✓[3]	X	✓[4]	✓[5]	X[3]
Wage enhancement subsidies	✓	X	✓[4]	X	✓

1 In Manitoba, all licensed child care spaces are eligible for subsidy. For-profit child care programs licensed prior to April 18, 1991, are eligible to receive an additional payment on behalf of subsidized families for up to 25 percent of their licensed spaces. In Nova Scotia, only registered centres (nonprofit centres operated by community-based organizations) and nonprofit family day care agencies may enrol children receiving subsidies.
2 Quebec's subsidies are being phased out (see Table 5).
3 Operating subsidies in British Columbia are only available to nonprofit providers. In New Brunswick and Ontario, some operating funds are available for spaces for children with special needs.
4 Saskatchewan is in the process of amalgamating Wage Enhancement Grants with Operating Grants into "Early Childhood Grants."

Table 6 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Individual subsidies	✓[2]	✓	✓[1]	✓	✓
Operating subsidies	✓	X[3]	✓[5]	✓	X[5]
Wage enhancement subsidies	✓	X	✓[6]	X	X

5 In Manitoba, only nonprofit child care facilities are eligible for operating grants, grants on behalf of children with disabilities, and start-up grants. Nova Scotia has operating grants for nonprofits as well as special grants for child development, provided for certain centres serving low-income families. Newfoundland has supply and equipment grants.

6 In Nova Scotia, wage enhancement subsidies are available to nonprofit (registered and non-registered) centres and licensed family day care agencies.

Source: Adapted from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit (1999), *Child Care in Canada: Provinces and Territories, 1998*, Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto; and relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 7

Special Benefits for Parents on Social Assistance

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*BC Benefits*	*Supports for Independence*	*Saskatchewan Assistance Plan*	*Employment and Income Assistance*	*Ontario Works*
• Department responsible for policy	Human Resources	Human Resources and Employment	Social Services	Department of Family Services and Housing	Ministry of Community and Social Services
• Administrative responsibility	Province	Province	Province	Provincial and local	Consolidated Municipal Service Managers or District Social Services Administration Boards
• Eligibility	Needs tested	Needs tested	Needs tested	Needs tested	Needs tested
• Single parents are considered eligible for work when youngest child is what age?	Single parent is considered employable when youngest child is 7 years old or older.	Single parent is considered employable when youngest child is 6 months or older.	Single parent is considered employable when youngest child is 2 years old or older.	Single parent is considered employable when youngest child is 6 years or older.	Parents who have children under school age are not required to participate in employment assistance activities. They may choose to participate voluntarily. School age is determined at the local level.

Table 7 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Income Security Plan* (Sécurité du revenu)	*Extended Benefits, Transitional Assistance* (TAP), *Interim Assistance* (IA), and *Income Supplement*	*Family Benefits (long-term) and Income Assistance (short-term)*[1]	*Welfare Assistance*	*Income Support Program*
• Department responsible for policy	Minister of Social Solidarity	Family and Community Services	Department of Community Services	Department of Health and Social Services	Department of Human Resources and Employment
• Administrative responsibility	Province	Province	Province	Province	Province
• Eligibility	Needs tested	Needs tested	Needs tested	Needs tested	Needs tested
• Single parents are considered eligible for work when youngest child is what age?	Phased reductions being applied over five years. In 2000, parents of children over 2 were considered employable. Non-employed parents on social assistance, are entitled to 23 hours free child care.	No formal criterion for age of child at which single parent is considered employable.	No age specified but not considered employable until the child is 6 months old.[2] Single parents are considered eligible if not presenting any barriers to employment.	Decision on a case-by-case basis.	Single parent is considered employable when youngest child is 2 years or older.

1 Legislation to replace the existing *Family Benefits Act* and most provisions of the *Social Assistance Act* with a new integrated program, the *Employment Support and Income Assistance Act*, will be introduced during the upcoming session.
2 In August 2001, single mothers will not be considered employable for 12 months after the birth of a child.
Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 8

Programs That Promote the Earning Capabilities of Parents

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*BC Benefits: Youth Works* (19-24) and *BC Benefits: Welfare to Work* (24+)	*Employment Initiatives*	*Saskatchewan Training Strategy: Bridges to Employment*	*Building Independence*	*Ontario Works: Employment Assistance Activities*
• Department responsible for policy	Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security	Human Resources and Employment	Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training	Family Services and Housing	Ministry of Community and Social Services
• Administrative responsibility	Training is provided by colleges, employers, private training centres, contractors. Employment-related activities involve private, public, and nonprofit employers.	Canada/Alberta Career Development Centres do assessments of eligibility. Community agencies, colleges, etc., provide training.	Implemented with a variety of partners, including regional colleges, New Careers Corporation, employers, nongovernmental organizations, and Aboriginal communities.	Family Services and Employment and the Training Services (ETS) division of the Department of Education and Training. The federal government and private employers are involved in some programs.	Delivery agents consisting of municipalities and First Nations.
• Eligibility	Eligibility is based upon screening to determine an individual's current state of job readiness. Participants are either referred to job search assistance, or to further assessment and/or employability skills programs.[1]	Supports for Independence (social assistance) clients, Employment Insurance recipients, and Employment Insurance reach-back clients are eligible for funding during training from the respective programs.	New Careers Corporation programs are available only to social assistance recipients. All other programs are open to all eligible Saskatchewan residents. All programs are voluntary except the Youth Futures pilot.	Social assistance recipients.	Every participant is required to participate in one or more employment assistance activity in accordance with Ontario Works regulations. although some exceptions may exist.

1 In British Columbia, participation is mandatory for Youth Works participants unless a temporary exemption is obtained. Unless temporarily excused, ongoing job search is mandatory for Welfare to Work participants, but program participation is optional and based on availability. Single parents with a dependent child under 7 may be temporarily excused.

Table 8 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	APTE: *Actions positives pour le travail et l'emploi*	Training and Employment Options	*Employment Support Services*	*Active Employment Measures*	*Employment and Career Services*
• Department responsible for policy	Minister of Social Solidarity	Training and Employment Development	Department of Community Services	Development, and Health and Social Services	Department of Human Resources and Employment
• Administrative responsibility	Minister of Social Solidarity, private sector and nonprofit sector.	Training and Employment Development	Department of Community Services. Other departments, levels of government and the private sector are sometimes involved.	Development, Health and Social Services, federal government, community partners, and employers.	Department of Human Resources and Employment. Some programs operate in partnership with community economic development agencies and the federal government.
• Eligibility	Required for recipients 18 to 24, voluntary for other employable people. Level of support for couples with children varies, depending on availability for and willingness to take paid employment (or employment measures).	Social assistance recipients, Employment Insurance claimants, and Employment Insurance reach-back clients are eligible for the programs.	Social assistance recipients and persons with disabilities.	Unemployed.	Unemployed and under-employed persons, plus social assistance and Employment Insurance recipients.

(continued)

Table 8 (cont'd)

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
• Detailed program description	Youth Works provides young people aged 19-24 with a living allowance and programs and services to enable them to move into employment. Welfare to Work offers employment-related programs to adults 25 years of age and over on income assistance. Based upon screening of an individual's job readiness, participants are referred to either Work Connections Self-Directed Services[2] or to complete an Employability Assessment for further needs determination.	Funding for basic foundation skills (academic upgrading, literacy, English as a second language) is through the Students' Finance Board, supported by grants. Post-secondary education such as college or university is through loans, grants, or part-time loans or bursaries. The Employment Alternatives Program, Job Placement Program, Training on the Job, Integrated Training, Employment Skills Program, Alberta Community Employment Program, and Alberta Job Corps all provide life skills, employment supports, and work experience.	Assessment, career counselling, upgrading, job readiness, etc. Work Placement offers wage subsidies and employment related supports to employers to hire eligible employees and provide on-the-job training leading to employment. Community Works provides wage subsidies and supports to community-based organizations and municipalities to hire eligible employees for projects that benefit the community and provide on-the-job training and work experience. Training allowances offered for people on basic education or related courses. Elements of post-secondary education are included.	Industry-based training provides workplace-based training. Employment Centres coordinate and provide support services such as lifeskills and job readiness skills training, during training and following placement. Employment Connections provides job preparation, job search, group training and individual job placement designed to help job seekers in receipt of income assistance obtain employment. Youth NOW provides training and employment programs for youth 18 to 24 years of age who are receiving municipal income assistance. A free of charge employment service provides individual or group counselling on employment issues to women of all ages.	Employment assistance activities consist of community participation and employment measures, including: job search; job search support services; referral to basic education and job specific skills training; employment placement; an education or training program approved by the administrator; a self-employment activity approved by the administrator; supports to self-employment; or a substance abuse recovery program.

2 Work Connections includes applicant orientation sessions (for BC Benefits applicants), Self-Directed Services, Career Planning Programs, Job Clubs, and Job Search Skills Services. Employability Skills Programs include both paid and volunteer work experience, self-employment training, academic skills training, and job readiness training.

Table 8 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
• Detailed program description	Employment integration assistance (wage subsidies, work experience in community, job experience). Self-employment support and employment preparation (advice to job seekers, vocational guidance, placement services and training). Volunteer work is recognized as a social insertion measure for people unable to find employment.	Educational upgrading, referral to short-term employment, subsidized employment, and greater recipient responsibility for training past high school. Career exploration program offers work experience and monthly training allowance.	Employment services include career planning, job-finding clubs, and subsidized employment placements. Work Activity Projects provide five weeks of "activity" for training. Assessment Services are provided for clients in training and employment programs.	On-the-job training with the private or nonprofit sectors. Work on long-term, comprehensive and training issues.	Includes career counselling, support for educational upgrading (e.g., adult basic education), support for training, support for job placement (e.g., cost-shared employment), employment subsidy to private and nonprofit sector (e.g., Employment Generation Program), and elements of post-secondary education. Newfoundland JOBS provides short-term training, job vouchers, wage subsidies, and career counselling to help social assistance recipients find long-term employment.

(continued)

Table 8 (cont'd)

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
• Benefits for parents	Employability and employment-related program benefits up to $100 per month while participating in programs; child care subsidy while participating in programs; earnings exemptions; transition to work benefits; family maintenance program.	Maintenance grants up to $6,000 are available to single parents and disadvantaged individuals. Participants may be eligible for a child care subsidy.	Includes child care and health benefits.	Subsidies available for child care costs. "Taking Charge" (a five-year pilot program ending in 2000) provides training and employment opportunities for single parents on social assistance.	Parents with child care requirements may benefit from Ontario Works Child Care programs.[3]
• Appeal	None established.	Appeals process available to all Supports for Independence clients and applicants.	Varies with individual programs and by delivery agent.	The Social Services Advisory Committee provides an appeal process to recipients of income assistance programs.	Internal review before applying to Social Benefits Tribunal.

3 Ontario Works Child Care programs include Ontario Works Child Care, Advance Child Care Payment, and STEP (Supports to Employment Program). Ontario Works participants may also access regular child care fee subsidies, and the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (see Table 9).

Table 8 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
• Benefits for parents	The Ministry of Social Solidarity covers the costs to parents in employability programs, beyond the 23 hours free child care to which they are entitled. Educational upgrading, support for single parents to enrol in post-secondary education.	Includes child care expense subsidies.	Child care expenses can be provided for children up to age 13. For single parents, financial assistance is provided for child care and transportation.[4] Career Planning for Single Parents provides assessment services, career counselling, training or retraining, job search assistance.	Subsidies sometimes available for child care costs. Skills Development is a pilot that includes parents on Parental Leave (Employment Insurance) in the last five years who are returning to the labour force.	Child care exemptions are available. Single Parent Employment Support Program (a three-year project) helps single parents on social assistance increase their employability skills.
• Appeal	Appeal process and leaflet.	The Family Income Security Appeal Boards permit clients to seek an independent review of a departmental decision.	Two levels of review are available: appealing to worker's immediate supervisor and formal appeal to the Appeal Board.		Two levels of appeal are available to the Income Support Program: Service Review Committee and Social Service Appeal Board.

4 From August 2001, the new social assistance system in Nova Scotia will include an increase in the maximum child care and transportation allowances, a new personal start-up allowance for beginning a job, and a new training allowance incentive.

Source: Adapted from Gorlick, Carolyne and Guy Brethour (1998), *Welfare-to-Work Program Summaries*, Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development. Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 9

Extended Health Benefits for Poor Families with Children

Province	Programs for families with dependant children who receive social assistance	Programs for low-income families with children who do not receive social assistance
British Columbia	*Healthy Kids* Children under 18 in families on social assistance are provided with a partial or full medical service plan. Each child is eligible for up to $700 per year for dental care and $250 per year for vision care.	*Healthy Kids* Children under 18 in low-income families not covered by federal or employer-sponsored insurance plans are provided with a partial or full medical service plan. Each child is eligible for up to $700 per year for dental care and $250 per year for vision care.
Alberta	*Coverage for health services.* People eligible for Support for Independence receive a medical services card, which covers eyeglasses, dental care, ambulance service and prescription drugs.	*Alberta Child Health Benefit Program* Children under 18 in families (with 1 child) with an annual income below $21,214 or whose parents are in an upgrading program and receive student assistance receive a premium-free health benefit plan that covers 50 to 100 percent of the costs of drugs, eye glasses, dental work, diabetic supplies, and emergency ambulance transportation. Eligibility levels are higher per child in larger families.
Saskatchewan	*Family Health Benefit* Families who receive social assistance and the Saskatchewan Child Benefit receive full, non-taxable supplementary health benefits including drug, dental, and optical services.	*Family Health Benefit* Low-income families receiving Saskatchewan Employment Supplements and/or Child Benefits receive non-taxable health benefits including drug, dental, and optical services. Parents are eligible for partial supplementary health benefits and children receive the full supplementary health benefit.
Manitoba	*Health Services Program* Participants in Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) and their children receive essential drug, dental and optical supplies and services.	*Extended Health Services Program* Sole-support parents leaving social assistance for employment may continue to be eligible for an extension of the Health Services Program for up to 12 months.
Ontario	*Ontario Drug Benefit Program (ODB)* People on social assistance (General Welfare or Family Benefits Assistance) are eligible for ODB coverage, which includes most of the cost of prescription drugs, basic dental and optical services for children and the disabled, and emergency dental services for adults.	*Trillium Drug Program* This program helps people who have high drug costs in relation to their income. People can apply if their private insurance does not cover 100 percent of their prescription drug costs and if they are not eligible for drug coverage under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. The program has an annual deductible that is based on income and family size.
Quebec	*Régime d'assurance-médicament* People on social assistance are automatically covered by this system, which includes free medication, dental, and optical services for children and partial or full coverage for adults.	*Régime d'assurance-médicament* People who are not covered by any other insurance scheme (by a job, a spouse or a professional association) are covered by this system for free medication, dental, and optical services for children and partial or full coverage for adults. For those with a low income, there is no premium to pay.

Table 9 (cont'd)

Province	Programs for families with dependant children who receive social assistance	Programs for low-income families with children who do not receive social assistance
New Brunswick	*Health Benefits* People on social assistance who are not covered under another plan receive coverage for dental, optical and other costs.	*Extended Health Benefits* Social assistance clients who find employment receive Health Benefits for one year after leaving social assistance.
Nova Scotia	*Family Benefits Pharmacare Program and Social Assistance Pharmacare Program* Both programs include drug coverage for prescriptions and are available to income assistance clients. All beneficiaries of the Family Benefits Pharmacare Program are required to contribute 20 percent of the cost of each prescription or a minimum of $3.00, to a limit of $150 per person per year. There is no annual limit for the Social Assistance Pharmacare Program.	*None*[1]
Prince Edward Island	*Financial Assistance Drug Plan* People on social assistance are eligible for dental services when in pain and suffering, an optical exam every two years, and $115 for the purchase of glasses, with no co-payment required.	*PEI Family Health Benefit* Families with incomes below $20,000 who are not on social assistance receive drug coverage that requires co-payment of up to $13 per prescription plus the pharmacy's dispensing fee.
Newfoundland and Labrador	*Drug Card* Families on social assistance receive coverage for unlimited prescription drug costs.	*Extended Drug Card Coverage* For social assistance clients who find employment, coverage can be extended for a six-month period after leaving social assistance.

1 From August 2001, the province of Nova Scotia will provide extended pharmacare drug coverage for 12 months for those leaving social assistance to join the work force.

Source: Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Table 10

Provincial Child Tax Benefits

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*BC Family Bonus*	*No program*	*Saskatchewan Child Benefit*	*No program*[1]	*No program*
• Department responsible for policy	Finance and Corporate Relations		Social Services		
• Administrative responsibility	Revenue Canada		Revenue Canada		
• Eligibility	Families with children under 18 and an earned income of between $3,750 and $20,921 in the previous tax year are eligible. Families with a net income below $18,000 receive the maximum benefit.		Families with children under 18 and a net income below $15,921 receive the maximum benefit. Families with incomes between $15,921 and $30,000 are eligible for partial benefits.		
• Benefits[2]	Tax-free, maximum monthly benefit of $25.41 for the first child, $42.08 for the second child, and $48.33 for each additional child.		Tax-free, maximum monthly benefit of $44.00 for the first child, $61.50 for the second child, and $67.66 for each additional child.		

1 Manitoba’s Lower Tax Commission (created in May 1999) was considering a new benefit as one of its reform options.
2 We use the amount published by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Provinces use a different model to calculate amounts by including the federal part of the benefit.

Table 10 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Family Allowance*	*NB Child Tax Benefit*	*Nova Scotia Child Benefit*[4]	*No program*	*Newfoundland and Labrador Child Benefit*
• Department responsible for policy	Ministry of the Family and Children	NB Finance	Community Services		Human Resources and Employment
• Administrative responsibility	Régie des Rentes du Québec	Revenue Canada	Revenue Canada		Revenue Canada
• Eligibility	Families with children under 18, with a net income below $15,000 for a single parent and $21,000 for two-parent families receive full benefits. Partial benefits are provided to families with incomes of less than $60,000, depending on the number of children.	Families with a net income of $20,000 or less will receive an annual tax-free payment of $250 for each child under age 18 living at home. Families with a net income of $20,000 or more may receive some benefits, depending on their income and the number of children.	Families with children under 18 and a net income up to $15,999 receive full benefits. Families between $16,000 and $20,921 receive partial benefits.		Families with children under 18 and an income below $15,921 receive the full benefit. Families between $15,921 and $20,921 receive partial benefits.
• Benefits[3]	Tax-free maximum monthly benefit for *single-parent family* with: One child – $160.42 Two – $212.50 Three – $264.58 Four – $316.67 Five – $368.75 *Two-parent family* with: One child – $52.08 Two – $104.17 Three – $156.25 Four – $208.33 Five – $260.42	Tax-free, maximum $20.83 per month per child.	Tax-free monthly payments up to $33.58/month for the first child, $26.58 for the second child, and $23.83 for each additional child.		Tax-free monthly payment. Up to $17/month for the first child, $26 for the second, $28 for the third, and $30 for each additional child.

3 We use the amount published by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency. Provinces use a different model to calculate amounts by including the federal part of the benefit.

4 Nova Scotia will introduce an Integrated Child Benefit for all children in low-income families effective August 2001. The allowance will be provided by increasing the Nova Scotia Child Benefit and combining it with the NCB. Low-income families will be eligible to receive up to $1,600 each year for each child.

Source: Site of the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca) and relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 11

Provincial Working Income Supplements for Families with Earned Income

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*Earned Income Benefit*	*Family Employment Tax Credit*	*Saskatchewan Employment Supplement*	*Child Related Income Support Program (CRISP)*	*Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families*
• Department responsible for policy	Finance and Corporate Relations	Treasury	Social Services	Family Services and Housing	Finance
• Administrative responsibility	Revenue Canada	Revenue Canada	Social Services	Family Services	Finance
• Eligibility	Families with children under 18 and earned income of more than $3,750 may be entitled. Amounts are reduced if family net income is more than $20,921.	Families with children under 18 and at least $6,500 in earned income but less than $50,000. Maximum to families with income under $25,000.	Families with children under 18, with incomes between $1,500 and $25,000 per year from employment income, child support, or income from farming or self-employment.	Families with children under 18 and incomes below $14,188 receive the maximum. Current family assets may not exceed $200,000.	Families with children under 7, with at least one parent employed, studying or in training. Maximum benefit to families with incomes under $20,000.[1]
• Benefits	Maximum benefit is $50.41 per month for a family with one child, $84.16 for two children, $111.66 for three children, and another $27.50 per month for each additional child.	Semi-annual payment. Maximum annual credit is $500 ($41.66 per month) per child or $1,000 ($83.33 per month) for families with two or more children.	Up to $2,100-$3,750 depending on the number of children. Maximum benefits to families with an annual income of $12,000 (up to $175 a month for one child, $210 for two children, and $245 for three children). Benefit is accrued between $1,500 and $9,900 of supplemental income, and reduced when family income exceeds $12,900.	Monthly supplement up to $30 per child.	Maximum annual benefit of $1,100 ($92 per month) for each child under 7. Since July 2000, the maximum annual benefit for single parent families is $1,310 ($109 per month) for each child under 7.

1 Benefit reduced by 8 percent of net family income in excess of $20,000. Families with earnings up to $5,000, and families with no earnings who are attending school or training can qualify for an annual benefit of 50 percent of qualifying child care expenses as reported on their previous year's tax return, up to the maximum benefit level. For families with earnings in excess of $5,000, the benefit is calculated as *the greater of* a percentage of the family's net earnings in excess of $5,000, *or* 50 percent of the family's qualifying child care expenses, up to the maximum benefit level.

Table 11 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Parental Wage Assistance Program* (APPORT: Aide aux parents pour leurs revenus de travail)	*Working Income Supplement*	*Family Assistance Program*	*No program*	*No program*
• Department responsible for policy	Ministry of Social Solidarity	Finance	Community Services		
• Administrative responsibility	Revenue	Revenue Canada	Community Services		
• Eligibility	Families with children under 18, earning at least $100/month ($1,200 annually) but no more than $22,000 ($15,000 for single parents), and assets under $45,000 for renters and under $90,000 for homeowners.	Families with children under 18 and earned income greater than $3,750 but under $25,921. Maximum to families with income under $20,921.	Families with children under 19 and earned income less than $16,500, and who have not received social assistance for more than three months in the previous year.		
• Benefits	Benefits can reach $3,456 per year ($288 a month) for one-child families with annual income of $12,000. Access to child care for $2 per day.	Maximum $250 per year.	$250 per year.		

Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 12

Tax Reductions and Credits for Families with Dependent Children

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan[1]		Manitoba[2]	
Program name	*Surtax Reduction*	*Selective Tax Reduction*	*Saskatchewan Sales Tax Credit*	*Saskatchewan Child Tax Reduction*	*Manitoba Tax Reduction*	*Manitoba Cost of Living Credit*
• Department responsible for policy	Finance and Corporate Relations	Treasury	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance
• Administrative responsibility	Revenue Canada	Revenue Canada	Revenue Canada	Revenue Canada	Finance	Finance
• Description[3]	Reduces the surtax payable for those with dependent children.	Reduces provincial taxes for families with low taxable income, until the flat tax rate is introduced.	Sales tax credit available to lower income families with children under 19. The child component of the credit is reduced at a rate of 1 percent as family net income rises over $14,100 ($8,600 if there is more than one qualifying child).	Reduces provincial taxes payable for low- and middle-income families with children.	Non-refundable tax credit available to families with dependent children.	Families with dependent children under 18. Benefits depend on family size and income.
• Benefits	Maximum benefit is $50 per child.		The child component of the Sales Tax Credit provides an additional $55 per child. For two-parent families, the maximum child component is $110, for an annual sales tax credit of $264. For single-parent families, the first child eligible is entitled to the adult benefit of $77 and the maximum child component of the credit is $55, for a maximum annual credit of $209.	Reduction of $250 per child per year to a maximum of $1,000 per year for families with incomes below $40,000.	Non-refundable tax reduction for each child under 18 : $370 for first child of a lone-parent family and $250 for each additional child and for each child in a two-parent family[2]	Refundable credit of $190 for the first child in a lone-parent family and $25 for each additional child and for each child in a two-parent family.

1 In Budget 2000, Saskatchewan announced a non-refundable child tax credit of $2,500 per dependent child, which will come into effect in 2001.

2 In Budget 2000, a new Family Tax Reduction was announced for 2001, which will replace the existing Manitoba Tax Reduction. The amount for each child will rise from $250 to $300 for both lone-parent and two-parent families.

3 Programs cover school-aged children to some extent, although the age range covered may vary by province.

Table 12 (cont'd)

Program description	Ontario			Quebec[4]		
Program name	*Ontario Tax Credits*	*Ontario Tax Reduction*	*Refundable tax credits* (including First Home, Sales Tax, Adoption expenses)	Quebec Child Tax Credit (*Crédit d'impôts pour enfants*)	*Tax Reduction for Families*	Tax Credits for Quebec Sales Tax (*Crédits d'impôts pour la TVQ*)
• Department responsible for policy	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance
• Administrative responsibility	Revenue Canada	Revenue Canada	Finance	Finance	Finance	Finance
• Description[5]	Refundable tax credits for Ontario residents over 16, based on family income. Includes Sales Tax Credit and Ontario Home Ownership Plan.	Reduces taxes for lower income taxpayers, eligible people with children 18 or under, or disabled children of any age.	Provides refundable tax credits to families with dependent children.	Universal tax credit for families with children. Maximum is paid to two-parent families with incomes of $21,825 ($15,332 for single parent). Not income tested, non-refundable.	Tax reduction for families with incomes below $51,000 ($45,917 for single parents). Families with incomes under $26,000 receive the maximum benefits.	For families with incomes under $36,266 (for two parents) and $34,566 (for single parents). Full credits to families with incomes below $26,000 with dependent children at home.
• Benefits	Sales Tax Credit provides $50 for each dependent child under 18.	Basic amount is $160 plus an additional $325 for each dependent child aged 18 or under. An additional reduction of $325 is also available for each disabled or infirm dependant.	The amount varies by the particular credit.	Maximum of $598 for the first child and $480 to $552 for subsequent children. Single parents receive an extra $260.	Maximum reduction of $1,500 for two-parent families and $1,195 for single-parent families.	Maximum of $308 per year for two-parent families and $257 for single-parent families.

(continued)

4 In Quebec, a refundable tax credit is offered to all families to cover 20 percent of fees related to child adoption for a maximum tax credit of $2,000.

5 Programs cover school-aged children to some extent, although the age range covered may vary by province.

Table 12 (cont'd)

Program description	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia		Prince Edward Island		Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Sales Tax Reduction* (HST)[6]	*HST*[6]	*Low-Income Tax Reduction Program*	*HST*[6]	*Low-Income Tax Reduction Program*	*HST*[6]
• Department responsible for policy	Revenue Canada		Finance		Finance	
• Administrative responsibility	Revenue Canada		Finance		Finance	
• Description[7]	Provides a sales tax credit to families with children under 19.		All income families. Maximum tax reduction for families with incomes up to $16,500.		All families with taxable income up to $15,000, reducing by 5 percent on income over that amount.	
• Benefits			Up to $300 a year for the first adult and $165 for each child.		Non-refundable credit against tax payable of $250 for tax filer, $250 for spouse or equivalent to spouse, and $200 per child.	

6 The Atlantic provinces participate in the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) Reduction Program, which merges the provincial sales tax and the federal government's Goods and Services Tax (GST). Thus families with children under 19 years old receive a sales tax reduction in each Atlantic province, delivered via the HST.

7 Programs cover school-aged children to some extent, although the age range covered may vary by province.

Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 13

Child Maintenance Enforcement

Program description	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario
Program name	*Family Maintenance Enforcement Program*	*Maintenance Enforcement Program*	*Maintenance Enforcement Program*	*Maintenance Enforcement Program*	*Family Responsibility Office (FRO)*
• Department responsible for policy	Attorney General	Justice	Justice	Departments of Family Services and Housing and Department of Justice	Attorney General
• Eligibility	Any parent with an existing maintenance order or registered agreement.	Any parent with court ordered maintenance.	Any parent with a court order, maintenance or written agreement.	Any parent with a family support order or agreement.	Person with custody, care or control of a child, with child support order, or domestic contract filed with the court and with FRO.
• Benefits	Provides enforcement for and monitoring of agreements/ orders. Family Maintenance Incentive encourages non-custodial parents on welfare to provide family maintenance payments on time.	Provides enforcement, including the cancellation of drivers' licenses, the reporting of debtors to the Credit Bureau, and the use of a new series of media advisories to locate individuals. Family and Social Services helps clients on social assistance obtain orders.	Provides enforcement to ensure compliance.	Provides automatic enforcement and computerized monitoring of payments.	Provides enforcement to encourage compliance.

Table 13 (cont'd)

Program description	Quebec	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island	Newfoundland and Labrador
Program name	*Support Payment Collection System (Régime de perception des pensions alimentaires)*	*Family Support Orders Service*	*Maintenance Enforcement Program*	*Family Support Orders Program*	*Support Enforcement Program*
• Department responsible for policy	Revenue and, in a limited number of cases, Justice	Justice, in partnership with Family and Community Services	Justice	Health and Social Services and Attorney General	Justice
• Eligibility	All separated parents.	Any parent with a family support order or agreement.	Any parent with a court order or registered agreement.	Any parent (with a support order) in receipt of social assistance (either financial assistance or a day care subsidy).	Any parent with a support order or an agreement that has been filed with the court.
• Benefits	Provides enforcement and can also advance payment.	Provides enforcement to ensure compliance and also assists parents on social assistance to obtain a child support order.	Ability to issue garnishment of income sources, to issue a lien on real property, to seize bank accounts, etc. Special enforcement is provided for single parents on social assistance by the Family Maintenance Income Support Program.	The Maintenance Enforcement Office can garnishee wages or any income source, attach liens to property, impound motor vehicles, suspend drivers' licenses, and take other remedies in accordance with the *Maintenance Enforcement Act*.	Receives and disburses court ordered funds for support and maintenance, traces delinquent payers, transmits support orders to other provinces, garnishes wages.

Source: Relevant provincial Web sites.

Table 14

Family Mediation Programs

Province	Family mediation programs and services
British Columbia	There are government programs available in British Columbia that offer voluntary mediation to resolve disputes about child custody and access or child protection, and there are many family mediators in the private sector.
Alberta	Mediation is available to parents referred by Family Court, the Court of Queen's Bench, lawyers or families who are self-referred. An Open Assessment Subsidy could be offered for private assessors' services if mediation is not appropriate or did not resolve the problem. A portion of the fees could be paid for parents in financial need.
Saskatchewan	Mediation is voluntary. The Mediation Information Program is free of charge. Individual fees for mediation are determined by the ability to pay if mediation is obtained through Saskatchewan Justice.
Manitoba	Parents may start mediation by themselves, be sent by a judge or be referred by a lawyer or a social service agency. Mediation is concerned specifically with child-related matters. Mediation on parenting issues is available at no cost from trained mediators through the provincial government's Family Conciliation service.
Ontario	The province distributes information about mediation services. The government funded Voluntary Family Mediation Services provide mediation for issues arising upon family breakdown. As the province expands its Unified Family Courts, family mediation services also will be made available at those sites.
Quebec	Family mediation is voluntary, but courts may order spouses to mediation. Services are provided free of charge to all couples with children during the negotiation and settlement of their application for separation, divorce, child custody, support, or the review of an existing judgement.
New Brunswick	The use of mediation services is voluntary and services are free.
Nova Scotia	Some municipalities make voluntary mediation available. As of May 2000, parties will contribute to the cost of mediation according to their income. Those earning under $20,000 are exempt from any costs.
Prince Edward Island	A free and voluntary mediation program is available through the Family Court. The Court may also order parties to mediate as a means of resolution.
Newfoundland and Labrador	*Information is not available.*

Source: Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Table 15

Child Advocates or Representatives

Province	Child advocate or representative for the child in divorce or child protection
British Columbia	*The Office of the Child, Youth and Family Advocate* Legislation ensures that rights and interests of children, youth and their family related to designated services are protected, assures their right to complaint, informs government and communities about services to children and families. The Advocate's office helps children under 16, youth and their families when they feel they are not getting the services needed from the provincial government by providing information and, in some cases, help for formal appeal. This office does not represent children in custody and access matters.
Alberta	*Children's Advocate* Represents the rights, interests and viewpoints of the child. Identifies issues and provides information and advice with respect to the nature, adequacy, availability, accessibility, effectiveness and appropriateness of services that are offered to children. This office does not represent children in custody and access matters.
Saskatchewan	*Children's Advocate* The Advocate assists children under 19 who use government services to ensure they have a voice. The office also provides ongoing public education on the needs of children and youth, helps to resolve disputes, conducts investigations, and advises government on how best to meet the needs of children and youth. The Advocate reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. This office does not represent children in custody and access matters.
Manitoba	*Children's Advocate* Represents the rights, interests and viewpoint of children receiving or entitled to receive child and family services. The Office has a relationship with the child welfare system, but does not represent children in custody and access matters.
Ontario	*Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy* Administers a system of advocacy on behalf of children and families who receive or seek services. Advises the Ministry of Community and Social Services on matters and issues concerning the interests of children and families. Provides advocacy except before the court. Collaborates with the Children's Lawyer, who delivers programs in the administration of justice on behalf of children under 18 with respect to their personal and property rights and relating to child custody and access, child protection, and civil litigation.
Quebec	*Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse* The *Youth Protection Act* confirms that child protection is a collective responsibility, incumbent on every adult member of society and especially on the people whose work brings them into contact with children. The Commission has the mandate to protect the rights of children and youth and also oversees the Director of the Youth Protection and the child protection mandate.
New Brunswick	*None*
Nova Scotia	*Office of the Ombudsman* The Office of the Ombudsman responds to Child Advocacy issues when requested and will intervene if there is difficulty between an office of government and a citizen.
Prince Edward Island	*None*
Newfoundland and Labrador	*None*

Source: Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Box 1

Family Leave Relevant to Children

British Columbia: An employee is entitled to up to five days of unpaid leave per employment year to meet responsibilities related to the care, health or education of any member of the employee's immediate family. "Immediate family" includes spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandchild or grandparent of an employee, or anyone who lives with the employee as a member of the family.

Saskatchewan: An employee is entitled to 12 days of unpaid leave to look after a sick immediate family member (and up to 12 weeks if it is a serious illness). In the December 6, 1999, Speech from the Throne, the government announced plans to review *The Labour Standards Act*, with the goal of introducing amendments in 2001, following consultation with employees and employers.

***Ontario*:** An employee working for a company with 50 or more employees is entitled to up to 10 days of unpaid family crisis leave per year.

Quebec: An employee is entitled to up to five days of unpaid leave per employment year to meet responsibilities related to the care, health or education of a minor child. An employee is entitled to five days of leave at the moment of the birth or adoption of a child. After two months of employment, the first two days are paid. However, if the employee is adopting the child of his or her spouse, only two days of unpaid leave are available.

***New Brunswick*:** An employee is entitled to up to 3 days of unpaid family responsibility leave per year to cope with and respond to health, education or care needs of a person in a close family relationship.

Source: Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Box 2

Provincial Deductions for Child Care Expenses

Ontario: Ontario has a Child Care Tax Credit, which uses the same eligibility criteria as the Federal Child Care Expense Deduction. This credit covers up to 25 percent of qualifying child-care expenses for children under the age of 7, up to a maximum credit of $400. The maximum is available to families with incomes of $20,000 or less.

Quebec: Quebec has a Tax Credit for Child Care Expenses (*Crédit d'impôts pour frais de garde)*, which is available for families without access to $5 a day child care. This credit covers from 75 percent of child care expenses for families with very low incomes to 24 percent of child care expenses for families with higher incomes. The credit is reduced progressively when annual incomes exceed $26,000. Families can receive up to $90 a week ($3,000 a year) for children 7 to 16.

Source: Clark, Christopher (1998), *Canada's Income Security Programs*, Canadian Council on Social Development. Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Box 3

The Use of the Federal Child Support Guidelines

British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland*:* These provinces have enacted legislation adopting the federal Child Support Guidelines.

Alberta*:* Alberta has not yet given a clear indication as to whether it will adopt the federal Child Support Guidelines in provincial legislation.

Quebec*:* The province of Quebec enacted legislation defining its own child support guidelines, which uses a different model than the federal Child Support Guidelines and applies to proceedings under both the federal *Divorce Act* and provincial legislation.

Source: Hornick, P. Joseph, Lorne Bertrand, D. Bala and M. C. Nicholas (1999), *The Survey of Child Support Awards: Final Analysis of Pilot Data and Recommendations for Continued Data Collection*, presented to Child Support Team, Department of Justice Canada. Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Box 4

Legal Aid for Separated and Divorcing Parents

British Columbia, Ontario and Newfoundland: Legal aid is available to low-income persons only in a critical or urgent situation (for example, in domestic violence cases).

Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba: Needs tested legal aid is available for divorce and support cases.

Quebec and Prince Edward Island: Legal aid may be available.

New Brunswick: Legal aid services are available to all beneficiaries of child support orders without needs testing. In the case of divorce, legal aid services are available only to the client who files a petition for divorce.

Nova Scotia: Needs tested legal aid is available only until the client files a petition for divorce.

Source: Hornick, P. Joseph, Lorne Bertrand, D. Bala and M. C. Nicholas (1999), *The Survey of Child Support Awards: Final Analysis of Pilot Data and Recommendations for Continued Data Collection*, presented to Child Support Team, Department of Justice Canada. Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Box 5

Unified Family Courts

The concept of family courts, that is, courts that exercise jurisdiction in relation to family-related laws, is developing in several jurisdictions across Canada. In Unified Family Courts, the court hears all family-related matters, whether these are covered by provincial or federal legislation. The federal government is encouraging the development of Unified Family Courts and providing funding for judges.

British Columbia and Alberta: These provinces are considering the creation of Unified Family Courts.

Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island: There are Unified Family Courts across each of these provinces.

Ontario: Ontario has had a Unified Family Court in Hamilton since 1977. Other cities have established Unified Family Courts and more are being created.

Quebec: Quebec does not have a Unified Family Court but there are specialized family law judges or divisions within the courts.

Nova Scotia: Nova Scotia has Unified Family Courts in Halifax and Cape Breton, regions that represent approximately 60 percent of the population of the province.

Newfoundland: Newfoundland has a Unified Family Court in St. John’s.

Source: *For the Sake of the Children*, Report of the Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access, Parliament of Canada, 1998. Hornick, P. Joseph, Lorne Bertrand, D. Bala and M. C. Nicholas (1999), *The Survey of Child Support Awards: Final Analysis of Pilot Data and Recommendations for Continued Data Collection*, presented to Child Support Team, Department of Justice Canada. Relevant federal and provincial Web sites.

Bibiliography

Boisvert, Maurice. 2000. "Speech to the World Summit on Social Development." Geneva, 26 June 2000. Available at http://www.famille-enfance.gouv.qc.ca.

Boychuk, Gerald. 1998. *Patchworks of Purpose: The Development of Provincial Social Assistance Regimes in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press).

Clark, Christopher. 1998. *Canada's Income Security Programs* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development).

CLC (Canadian Labour Congress). 2000. *Analysis of UI Coverage for Women* (Ottawa: Canadian Labour Congress). Available at http://www.clc-ctc.ca.

CRRU (Childcare Resource and Research Unit). 2000. *Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada: Provinces and Territories 1998* (Toronto: Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto). Available at http://www.childcarecanada.org.

Doherty, Gillian, Hillel Goelman, Annette LaGrange, Donna S. Lero, and Jocelyne Tougas. 2000. *You Bet I CARE: Summary of Findings* (Guelph, ON: Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being). Available at http://www.cfc-efc.ca/docs/00001269.htm.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1999. *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

F-P-T Council (Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council of Ministers on Social Policy Renewal). 2000. *Public Dialogue on the National Children's Agenda – Developing a Shared Vision. Public Report*. Available at http://www.socialunion.gc.ca.

__________. 1999. *A National Children's Agenda – Developing A Shared Vision*. Backgrounder available at http://www.socialunion.gc.ca.

Gorlick, Carolyne, and Guy Brethour. 1998. *Welfare-to-Work Programs in Canada: A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development).

__________. 1998. *Welfare-to-Work Program Summaries* (Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development).

Gouvernement du Québec. 2000. "La ministre Pauline Marois veut doter les familles québécoises d'un régime moderne et plus généreux – Assurance parentale : Québec va de l'avant." 6 June 2000. Available at http://communiques.gouv.qc.ca/gouvqc/communiques/GPQF/Juin2000/06/c1991.htm

__________. 1997. *Les enfants au coeur de nos choix. Nouvelles dispositions de la politique familiale* (Québec: Les Publications du Québec).

Government of Canada. 2000. *National Child Benefit Reinvestment Report*. Available at http://www.socialunion.gc.ca.

Guest, Denis. 1985. *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*. 2nd revised ed. (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia).

Hornick, P. Joseph, Lorne Bertrand, D. Bala, and M.C. Nicholas. 1999. *The Survey of Child Support Awards: Final Analysis of Pilot Data and Recommendations for Continued Data Collection*. Report Presented to the Child Support Team (Ottawa: Department of Justice Canada). Available at http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca.

Hughes, Karen. 1999. *Gender and Self-Employment in Canada: Assessing Trends and Policy Implications*. CPRN Study No. W|04 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks). Available at http://www.cprn.org/publications.

Jenson Jane. 2001. "Re-Thinking Equality and Equity: Canadian Children and the Social Union." In Broadbent, E. (ed.), *Equality and the Democratic State (*Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

Jenson, Jane, and Mariette Sineau. 2001. *Who Cares? Women's Work, Childcare and Welfare State Redesign* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press).

Jenson, Jane, with Sherry Thompson. 1999. *Comparative Family Policy: Six Provincial Stories*. CPRN Study No. F|08 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks). Available at http://www.cprn.org/publications.

Kohen, Dafna, Clyde Hertzman, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn. 1999. "Neighbourhood Influences on Children's School Readiness." Human Resources Development Canada, Working Paper No. W-98-25E. *ARB Bulletin* (Fall 1999).

Krashinsky, Michael, and Gordon Cleveland. 1999. *Tax Fairness for One-Earner and Two-Earner Families: An Examination of the Issues*. CPRN Discussion Paper No. F|07 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks). Available at http://www.cprn.org/publications.

Lepage, Francine, and Marie Moisan. 1998. "L'assurance parentale : la nouvelle politique québécoise et les prestations réservées aux pères." In Dandurand, Renée B-, *et al*. (eds.), *Quelle politique familiale à l'aube de l'an 2000 ?* (Paris: L'Harmattan).

McCain, Margaret N., and Fraser J. Mustard. 1999. *Reversing the Real Brain Drain: The Early Years Study Final Report*. Available at http://www.childsec.gov.on.ca.

McCarthy, Shawn. 2000. "National poverty rate dips. But number of poor children up 42 percent since 1989 despite booming economy." *Globe and Mail*, 16 December 2000.

Milne, William J. 1995. "Revising Social Assistance in New Brunswick: A Look at the Demonstration Projects." In Richards, John, *et al*. (eds.), *Helping the Poor: A Qualified Case for "Workfare"* (Toronto: C.D. Howe Institute).

National Children's Alliance. 1998. Investing in Children and Youth: A National Children's Agenda (Ottawa: National Children's Alliance). Available at http://www.national childrensalliance.com/nca/pubs/investing.htm

Saint-Martin, Denis. 2000. "De l'État-providence à l'État d'investissement social : Un nouveau paradigme pour enfanter l'économie du savoir ?" in Leslie A. Pal, *How Ottawa Spends 2000-2001: Past Imperfect, Future Tense* (Toronto: Oxford University Press).

Saskatchewan Labour. 1998. *Towards More Work-Family Balance in Saskatchewan: The Report of the Public Task Force on Balancing Work and Family* (Regina: Saskatchewan Labour). Available at http://www.labour.gov.sk.ca.

Special Joint Committee on Child Custody and Access. 1998. *For the Sake of the Children* (Ottawa: Department of Justice Canada). Available at http://canada.justice.gc.ca.

Stroick, Sharon M., and Jane Jenson. 1999. *What Is the Best Policy Mix for Canada's Young Children?* CPRN Study No. F|09 (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks). Available at http://www.cprn.org/publications.

UNICEF. 2000. "A League Table of Child Poverty in Rich Nations," *Innocenti Report Card* 1 (June), United Nation's Children's Fund (Florence: Innocenti Research Centre).

Vanier Institute of the Family. 2000. *Profiling Canada's Families II* (Ottawa: Vanier Institute).

White, Linda A. 2000. "Child Care in Canada and the United States." In *Canada Watch*, Vol. 8: 4-5.

CPRN Funding Sources

Core Funders

Canadian International Development Agency
Citizenship and Immigration
Fisheries and Oceans
Health Canada
Human Resources Development Canada
Public Works and Government Services Canada
Transport Canada

Corporate Support

The Bank of Montreal
Canadian Pacific Charitable Foundation
Clarica
Hydro-Québec
IPSCO Inc.
Noranda Inc.
Power Corporation of Canada
The Royal Bank of Canada
Scotiabank
Sun Life Assurance Company of Canada
TELUS (formerly BCT. Telus Communications)

Family Network Support

Canadian Pacific Charitable Foundation

Project Funders for *Comparative Family Policy: Six Provincial Stories* (CPRN Study No. F|08, 1999)

The Atkinson Charitable Foundation
Health Canada
Hospital for Sick Children Foundation
Human Resources Development Canada
Laidlaw Foundation
Lawson Foundation
The provincial governments of:
- British Columbia
- Ontario
- Saskatchewan

Project Funders for *Comparative Family Policy: Four Provincial Stories* (unpublished Background Paper)

Health Canada
Human Resources Development Canada

Project Funders for *School-aged Children across Canada: A Patchwork of Public Policies* (CPRN Study No. F|10, forthcoming)

Canadian Heritage
Health Canada, Childhood and Youth Division
Hospital for Sick Children Foundation
Justice Canada, National Crime Prevention Centre
Justice Canada, Research and Statistics Division
Ontario Children's Secretariat
Ontario Citizenship, Culture and Recreation
Ontario Community and Social Services
Ontario Education
Saskatchewan Social Services