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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Without more money for child care, the budget cannot be termed “gender-focused”

OTTAWA, February 14, 2018 – Reacting to the announcement that the 2018 federal budget will be tabled February 27, Canada’s national child care advocacy organization says that if the budget does not include a significant boost in financial support for child care, it will fail to meet Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s stated commitment to gender equality.

“The 2018 federal budget is our own government’s opportunity to step up to the Prime Minister’s appeal to world leaders in Davos a few weeks ago to support women to become full and equal participants in the paid labour force,” said Morna Ballantyne, Executive Director of Child Care Now (formerly the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada).

Child Care Now is calling for an additional federal allocation to early learning and child care in the February 27 budget of \$1 billion for 2018-19 and that provinces/territories receiving funds be required to adopt evidence-based approaches to building high-quality child care systems that all children can access. It is noteworthy that this funding commitment would be less than that of the past Liberal government in 2005, which amounted to \$1 billion in 2005 dollars.

“The 2017 federal budget allocated only \$540 million for child care in 2018-2019, rising only \$550 million by 2021-2022,” said Ballantyne. “This is not close to enough to begin to address the magnitude of the child care crisis and bring Canadian child care into the twenty-first century.”

Child Care Now said that without more federal money, together with a much stronger federal child care policy framework, the gaps in quality, affordability and access will widen across the country, as will the gaps between regions, social classes and women and men.

“The problem of inadequate funding for child care has been raised repeatedly by parents, educators, women’s equality advocates and policy experts in the media, in public meetings, at the Status of Women committee and during the pre-budget consultations, including those on gender-based budgeting carried out by Federal Finance Minister Bill Morneau,” said Ballantyne.

She also noted that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance recommended that the budget “allocate funds needed to develop and implement an early learning and child care system designed to give all Canadian children and families access to high-quality, inclusive child care services.”

Child Care Now's budget recommendation:

1. Allocate \$1 b in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, most of which would be transferred to provinces/territories/Indigenous communities to begin building an ELCC system.

2. Replace the 11-year child care funding plan set out in the 2017 federal budget with one that will allow governments to build a universal affordable high quality inclusive system for all children and families in Canada. By the tenth year, Canada should be spending on child care at least 1% of GDP, the international benchmark used by the OECD, UNICEF and other international bodies.

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