

For Immediate Release  
Monday, January 12, 2009

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## **Investing in Canada's Children Makes Economic Sense**

The President of the PEI Union of Public Sector Employees is hopeful a recently released study on Early Childhood Education and Care will motivate the Harper Government to develop and fund a comprehensive National Child Care Plan.

“Canada received a shameful last place rating in the UNICEF sponsored study which compared the services and programs available in the world's 25 most affluent countries,” states Shelley Ward. “Canadians are taxed at rates comparable to, or higher than many of the other countries in the report, so why then are we at the bottom of the pack when it comes to these essential services? The children of today are the first generation that will spend a majority of their time in an outside of the home care setting. If this care is provided as part of a comprehensive child care strategy - it has the potential to ensure the next generation are provided with the supports and programs to allow them to develop to their full potential.”

The UNICEF report states “*...robust public policy supported by significant public funding in early childhood education and childcare are not only urgently overdue in Canada but high quality ECEC should be part and parcel of strategies to respond to current economic challenges.*”

“During the last session of Parliament Bill C-303 ‘The Early Learning and Childcare Act.’ was supported in the House by all four of our Island M.P.s. The Bill did not receive Royal Assent prior to the dissolution of Parliament and as a result is now null and void. The Harper Government is working to develop a budget that will contain a strategy to get us through these tough economic times. It is imperative this budget include an investment in the education and care of our future generation. The last place ranking is proof the existing plan has done little to support Canadian children and their families. We are calling on all four of the Island's elected Members of Parliament to take a stand on behalf of Island families and speak up in support of a National Childcare Program,” concluded Ward.

The PEI Union of Public Sector Employees is the province's largest labour union, representing over 5000 members in both the public and private sectors.