



END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**March 21, 2013**

### **Nothing in the budget for children ...**

**Toronto:** Today's federal budget ignores Canada's children, says Campaign 2000. There's little in this budget for the 979,000 low-income children and their parents who feel the double burden of job loss and economic stress at home. Instead, the budget puts deficit reduction ahead of human development and has not even a hint of a vision for a future in which modern-day families are decently supported.

Going into this budget, Campaign 2000 was looking for a mix of social infrastructure and effective income supports to reduce Canada's 14.5% rate of child and family poverty. Instead, it is silent on family income security and on early childhood education and care, in no way responding to Parliament's 2009 unanimous vote to "develop an immediate plan to eradicate poverty for all."

"We recommended streamlining the existing family tax and transfers and re-profiling the ineffective Universal Child Care Benefit; we proposed using the UCCB's \$2.5 Billion to increase child benefits to \$5,400 (maximum) and to begin establishing an early childhood education and child care system," said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000.

"What will the budget's emphasis on jobs and training mean for low and modest-income families? Not much. More than 200 low-income women in Ontario – many relying on social assistance - told us that they want and need training to obtain good jobs with security and benefits. The training needs to be substantive – more than just a primer on how to write a resume. Those not in the workforce or eligible for EI must be able to take advantage of the skills training. And barriers to labour force participation, particularly high quality affordable child care, must be addressed in any real workforce development strategy," added Rothman.

The 2013 budget lacks the vision necessary to end the crushing effects of Aboriginal child and family poverty. It also ignores several key facts. First, the poverty rates of Aboriginal families with children are much higher than those of non-Aboriginal Canadian families. Second, poverty is a major contributor to poor health, mental health problems, violence and lack of educational attainment among Aboriginal Canadians. The budget makes modest investments in health services, income assistance and skill training for Aboriginal people, but they will have limited impact if poverty is not eradicated. "Multi-year plans to address Aboriginal poverty must be developed with First Nations on reserve and with Metis and off reserve organizations in cities," urged Damon Johnston, President of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg.

"Why not at least commit to a multi-year plan to bring Aboriginal poverty rates down to those of other Canadians as we recommended in our 2012 [Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada](#)," asked Rothman.

Sid Frankel, University of Manitoba Faculty of Social Work, commented, "The measures to enhance high school education, entry into post-secondary education and transition to the labour market will have no impact for those children who have failed in school and dropped out because of the stress and material deprivation of poverty."

The modest allocations for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy which will adopt a 'housing first' approach and the renewal of the Investment in Affordable Housing are welcome but no substitute for a national housing program to address the needs of 1.5 million households in Canada that live in precarious housing.

"Will the Community Improvement Fund support social infrastructure such as the purpose-built high quality child care that families in small and large, urban and rural communities need? It's high time the government addresses the critical social needs of communities and directs substantial funds toward these services that help to knit together diverse communities while supporting a vibrant economy," said Martha Friendly, Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

This budget does little to bolster the tattered safety net that has left Canadians in economic insecurity. "By not recognizing poverty's significant impacts not only on individuals and families, but on Canada's social and economic well-being, the federal government's budget misses people's needs by a mile," added Michael Hart, University of Manitoba Faculty of Social Work. Aboriginal people, sole support mothers, young families, recent immigrants, racialized groups, and people with disabilities face greater risks. At the same time, inequality between the rich and the poor in Canada has grown more than in any other OECD country (except Germany).

"We will continue to seek changes that reduce poverty and inequality and make the tax system more progressive", adds Rothman.

*Campaign 2000 is a non partisan cross Canada coalition of over 120 organizations committed to ending child & family poverty in Canada. [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)*

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