



Submission to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, 2006

Executive Summary

Specialink: The National Centre for Child Care Inclusion works to expand the quality and quantity of opportunities for inclusion in child care, recreation, and other community settings, for young children with special support needs and their families. Our priorities for consideration by the Standing Committee on Finance, 2006 are summarized as follows:

We call upon the federal government to ensure that Budget 2007 includes a broad comprehensive disability strategy that moves past tax measures and concentrates on programme expenditures. Beyond the focus on the universal child care benefit and the undefined nature of the space creation initiative, the needs of children with disabilities may once again be overlooked without very specific direction to community groups and governments.

We believe that we must prioritize investments in building an inclusive children's public policy agenda in order to meet the social development needs and aspirations of children with disabilities and their families. We want to see the impact of your policy decisions tracked as well, particularly on these indicators:

- The number of children with special needs in child care programs
- Evidence of children with a range of needs and levels included
- Number of centres accepting children
- Reduced incidence of children with Special Needs being turned down
- Higher retention ... No Expulsion
- Inclusive quality indicators and quality improvement over time, as a condition of funding for spaces and operations

Specialink recommends the federal government develop:

- Policies that affect availability & access for children & parents
- Policies that ensure all programs are physically accessible with design features appropriate for care

We call upon the members of this House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance to recommend that the Government of Canada honour the spirit and intention of the ten bi-lateral agreements on Early Learning and Child Care, made with all Canadian provinces who agreed on shared and authentic support to the youngest citizens of Canada and their families.

