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## Election Platform Analysis: Children and Youth in the 2025 Federal Election

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### 1. Election priorities for Canada's Children and Youth

Children First Canada (CFC) has called on all federal parties to put children and youth at the heart of Canada's political agenda, with bold action to address urgent challenges and ensure every child grows up safe, healthy, and empowered. CFC's platform priorities include:

- Eradicating child poverty and food insecurity
- Investing in youth mental health and early learning
- Ensuring affordable child care and healthy school food for all
- Protecting children online and strengthening community safety
- Advancing equity, reconciliation, and opportunities for Indigenous children and youth
- Investing in play, physical activity, and a healthy environment
- Empowering youth through leadership, civic engagement, and a lower voting age
- Establishing a National Strategy for Children and Youth, and a Federal Commissioner for Children

#### State of the Nation's Children:

- 1 in 5 children lives in poverty.
- 1 in 2 youth report struggling with mental health.
- More than 1 in 4 children in Canada live in a household experiencing food insecurity.
- Over 1.5 million children in Canada do not have a regular family doctor or primary care provider.
- Average wait times can range from 6 months to over 1 year for counselling or psychiatric care, and in some regions, children wait up to 2 years for specialized mental health support.
- Canada ranks 30th of 38 wealthy nations for children's well-being (UNICEF) and 66th on the global Kids Rights Index
- Millions of kids experience violence and discrimination

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**Children and youth are 25% of our population—and 100% of our future—but they cannot vote.**

**They're counting on you to make their issues count at the ballot box.**



## 2. Party Platform Analysis: Children & Youth Commitments

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### LIBERAL PARTY

#### What's Promised

- **\$10-a-day Child Care:** Permanent funding and 100,000 new spaces by 2031.
- **National School Food Program:** Permanent, aiming to reach all children.
- **Youth Mental Health Fund:** Help for 100,000 youth annually; ongoing suicide prevention.
- **Online Safety Laws:** Combat child exploitation and cyberbullying.
- **Indigenous Children:** Advance Indigenous jurisdiction over child & family services; fund K-12 and post-secondary access.
- **Youth Jobs & Training:** Expanded Canada Summer Jobs, Youth Employment Strategy, Youth Climate Corps.
- **Interest-Free Student Loans:** Continued support for post-secondary students.
- **Safer Communities Fund:** Ongoing youth crime prevention and Indigenous-led initiatives.

#### What's Missing

- No commitment to lower the voting age or expand youth civic engagement.
- No national pharmacare for children.
- No national strategy or children's commissioner.
- No explicit strategy for school-based mental health, play, or physical activity.
- No accelerated or new child poverty reduction targets.

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### CONSERVATIVE PARTY

#### What's Promised

- **Lower Taxes for Families:** Cut lowest tax bracket, save families up to \$1,800/year.
- **Affordable Homes for Young Families:** Axe GST on new homes under \$1.3 million.
- **End Carbon Tax:** Lower cost of living for families.



- **Permanent Caregiver Tax Credit:** More accessible family supports.
- **Protect Universal Health Care:** Uphold federal agreements.
- **Increase Doctors:** 15,000 more by 2030; easier foreign credential recognition.
- **Autism Supports:** Double support for youth with autism.
- **Youth Skills & Trades:** Apprenticeships, trades toolkit, cadets, and language exchanges.
- **Tougher Child Protection Laws:** Crack down on online and human trafficking.
- **Support for Indigenous Housing & Youth:** Empower Indigenous-led solutions.

#### **What's Missing**

- No school food program or nutrition commitments.
- No plan to lower the voting age or promote youth civic leadership.
- No national strategy or federal children's commissioner.
- No play, recreation, or school-based mental health initiatives.
- No poverty reduction targets or national pharmacare for children.

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#### **NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP)**

##### **What's Promised**

- **Universal Childcare:** Protect and expand \$10-a-day program.
- **Permanent School Food Program:** End child hunger at school.
- **Youth Mental Health:** Expand coverage and access.
- **Primary Care for All:** Family doctor for every Canadian by 2030.
- **End Child Poverty:** Housing supports, prevention of homelessness.
- **Lower the Voting Age:** Empower youth at 16+.
- **Youth Job Training/Employment:** Apprenticeships, school-to-career pathways, Youth Climate Corps.
- **Indigenous Child Welfare:** Implement Spirit Bear Plan; support self-determination.
- **Climate Action for Youth:** Youth Climate Corps and Environmental Bill of Rights.

##### **What's Missing**



- No explicit commitments for a national children’s commissioner or ombudsperson.
  - No comprehensive national strategy for children and youth.
  - Less focus on play, recreation, and physical activity.
  - No universal pharmacare for children (broader program focus).
  - Limited civic engagement programming beyond voting age reform.
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## GREEN PARTY

### What’s Promised

- **Universal Early Learning & Child Care:** Expand and protect access, especially for underserved groups.
- **Universal School Food Program:** Free, healthy meals for every student.
- **Tuition-Free Post-Secondary:** Phased in, starting with low-income and Indigenous students.
- **Eliminate Federal Student Debt:** End interest on new loans.
- **Youth Employment:** Youth Climate Corps and expanded youth job/training programs.
- **Guaranteed Livable Income:** Financial security for youth.
- **Free Youth Mental Health Services:** Including counseling and crisis support.
- **Regulate Social Media:** Protect youth from online harms.
- **Lower Voting Age to 16.**
- **Federal Children’s Advocate:** To uphold children’s rights and the UNCRC.
- **Indigenous Youth:** Address foster care and justice overrepresentation.

### What’s Missing

- No national curriculum on children’s rights or digital literacy.
  - No comprehensive strategy for school-based mental health or reducing wait times.
  - No explicit focus on physical activity, play, or recreation.
  - No mention of corporal punishment/child abuse law reform.
  - No reference to Jordan’s Principle or child-specific reconciliation initiatives (broader TRC focus).
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## BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

### What's Promised

- **Child Benefit Reform:** Better support for blended families.
- **GST Credits:** Higher credits and GST exemptions to help families.
- **French-Language Education:** Protect and promote French in education for youth.
- **Health Transfers:** Increased funding for Quebec's public system.
- **Student Housing:** Unconditional transfers for student and youth housing.
- **Child Protection:** Stronger laws against exploitation and crime recruitment of minors.
- **Inquiry on Abuse in Sports:** Addressing safe environments for youth athletes.
- **Indigenous Children:** Support for TRC implementation and investments in northern/Indigenous communities.

### What's Missing

- No comprehensive child or youth strategy or commissioner.
- No plan for youth civic engagement or lower voting age.
- No national school food or nutrition initiatives.
- No dedicated approach to child and youth mental health.
- No specific policies for children and youth with disabilities.
- No direct poverty reduction, play, or recreation strategy.

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## 3. CALL TO ACTION

**Canada's children and youth are facing a crisis—one that affects their health, safety, opportunities, and future.** As voters, you have the power to put kids on the ballot and ensure their voices are heard.

**We urge you to vote for the party and candidates whose vision and commitments best align with making Canada the best place in the world for kids to grow up.**

Children can't vote, but you can. **Let's put kids first in this election—and every day.**

#VoteForKidsCAN #EveryChildThriving #PutKidsFirst

