

November 18, 2004

If we get child care right, everyone benefits, according to a new campaign to be launched by the Advisory Council on the Status of Women at a provincial conference in Fredericton Friday.

"Quality child care is good for children and good for community development," said Mary Lou Stirling, Chairperson of the Advisory Council.

"When three-quarters of mothers with preschoolers are in the labour force, investment in early childhood and child care is critical to economic growth. To the extent that families are not having the number of children they wanted because they are not finding the supports they need, then child care services can be important to a province such as New Brunswick with a low birth rate. And if children are spending a lot of their time away from their parents, in child care, then we must ensure that child care offers developmentally appropriate stimulation in a safe and nurturing environment."

Almost 200 persons are attending the conference, The Economics of Child Care, Friday organized by the Advisory Council with sponsorship from Business New Brunswick and Training and Employment Development.

"One of the campaign posters to be released by the Advisory Council features a father and child walking to work and to a child care site," said Mary Lou Stirling. "This is reality for New Brunswick families."

According to the Council, "Investment in early childhood education leads to major payoffs down the road. Through savings on social programs, increased productivity and higher tax revenues, we all gain. It is estimated that for each \$1 spent on quality child care, there is a \$2 future return to society. The governor of the Bank of Canada, economist David Dodge, a strong defender of early childhood development, says that the "human development" setting that gives the biggest payback to our investment is early childhood development. When youngsters enter the school system ready to learn and succeed, it makes schools more effective. This becomes important in our aging society with a proportionately smaller labour force."

Economist Gordon Cleveland of University of Toronto and accountant Lynell Anderson of British Columbia will speak on why investment in early learning and child care is a wise investment.

At noon, the Vice President of RBC Financial Group, Charles Coffey, will speak on the cost of not doing enough in child care. Integrated approaches to child care, school and kindergarten will be explored by Jane Bertrand of the Atkinson Centre and Toronto First Duty Project.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, contact Chairperson Mary Lou Stirling at 506 444-4101 or 1-800 332-3087.