



**YWCA Toronto**

YWCA Toronto promotes equality, economic security and lives free from violence.

## **THE BLOG**

# Canada Child Benefit A Game-Changer For Women And Children

It is historic -- the benefit provides targeted support to low and moderate income families across Canada. According to the minister of families, children and social development, it is projected to slash child poverty rates in this country by a record 40 per cent.

06/30/2016 04:44 EDT | **Updated** 07/05/2016 05:59 EDT



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Thousands of women and children in need will receive a financial boost via the new Canada Child Benefit program launching in July.

It is historic -- the benefit provides targeted support to low and moderate income families across Canada. According to the minister of families, children and social development, it is projected to slash child poverty rates in this country by a record 40 per cent. This is a huge social policy win that has been decades in the making. Recall that it was in 1989

when the House of Commons unanimously voted to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000.



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Cautious optimism has been the name of the game since the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) was unveiled during last year's federal election. That optimism grew with the Throne Speech, when the government reiterated that it would "provide more direct help to those who need it by giving less to those who do not." Last week, lingering concerns were assuaged when the Ontario government confirmed that children in families on social assistance will keep the full benefit -- it will not be clawed back. Support is on the way for families surviving on some of the lowest incomes in Canada.

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Despite being a wealthy city, Toronto has hung onto its shameful title of child poverty capital of Canada for two years in a row now.

Women lead many of these families living in extreme poverty. In Toronto -- 37 per cent of single mother led families live in poverty. Every single day, women are struggling to provide for themselves and their children in an increasingly expensive city.

For women, the rise of precarious employment means no guaranteed hours of work, no benefits and no sick time. Wait lists for affordable housing and child care are so long that it feels hopeless. And social assistance rates remain far too low, forcing many to make the impossible choice of whether to feed their children or pay their rent. Poverty destroys lives, limits opportunity and harms families and communities.

The Canada Child Benefit is an example of the social policies needed to ensure prosperity is shared by all. It will change lives -- especially for women and children fleeing violence. Fear of economic hardship is one of the driving forces that keeps women and children trapped in abusive situations. By increasing the incomes of mothers living in poverty, it creates more options for safety planning. For mothers with children in emergency shelters, the financial boost could help them secure housing in the community when they are ready. This will help free up essential spaces for other women and children in need.

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Despite being a wealthy city, Toronto has hung onto its shameful title of child poverty capital of Canada for two years in a row now. Years of government inaction have contributed to stark inequalities in children's lives with divisions along neighbourhood, racial and ethnic lines. And across Canada, indigenous children are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as non-indigenous children. The Canada Child Benefit is an overdue step towards improving economic conditions and opportunities for children and families trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty.

Children are our future and we all have a vested interest in ensuring they get the best possible start in life. It is taxpayers that assume the costs associated with high poverty rates, including higher health care costs, greater demands on social and community services, diminished educational success and negative economic impacts. Further, Statistics Canada released research in 2014 which found that poverty is associated with the premature death of 40,000 Canadians each year -- this is absolutely preventable and

unacceptable in a wealthy country like Canada. There is a strong moral, social and economic case for investing in poverty reduction.

In halls of power where discussion often focuses on the middle class, strong social policies like the Canada Child Benefit are game-changers. Let us celebrate this victory and continue working to strengthen our social safety net -- from the call for Toronto City Councillors to support new revenue tools for poverty reduction, to advancing affordable child care and safe affordable housing, to implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action. Working together, we can end poverty.

*Maureen Adams is the Director of Advocacy and Communications and Etana Cain is the Senior Advocacy and Communications Officer at YWCA Toronto, Canada's largest multi-service organization for women.*

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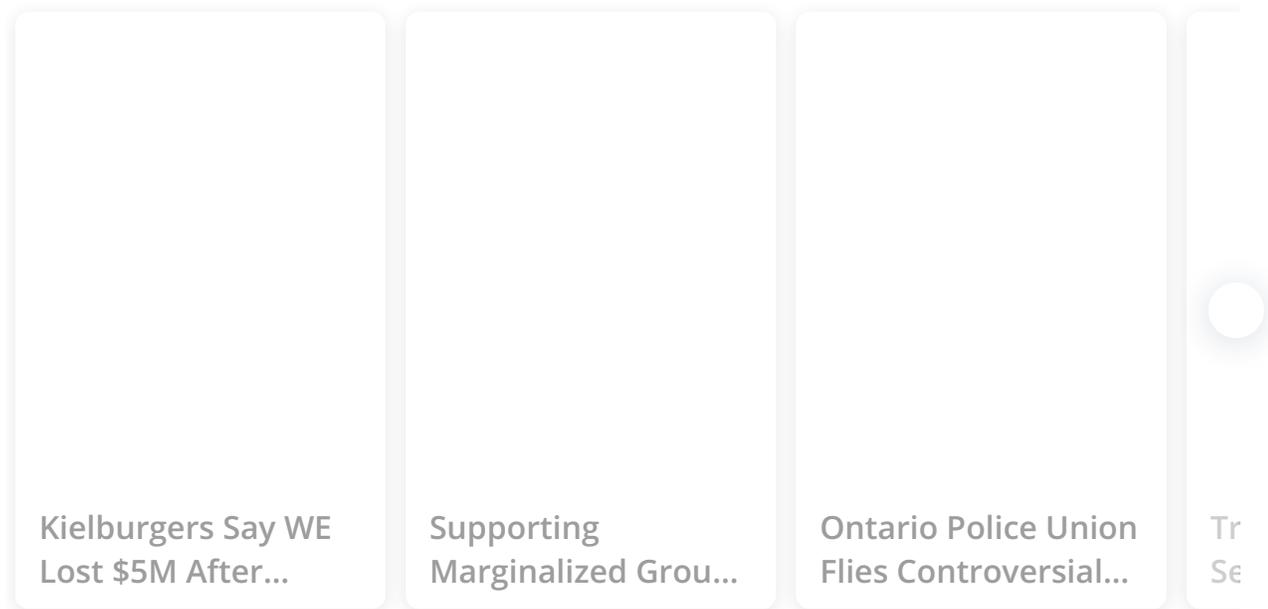
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11 September, 2019



Women are also our future. Unfortunately, it's not always so easy for her. The mother should be able to decide whether it should be the father to care for the child or not. (it's only fair--after all, she carried it for nine months). She might want to go to school. A man can easily learn a trade while the woman is pregnant before she hands it off to him.

We need to stop portraying men as goofs and instead see them as the natural caregivers we are due to our protective nature. As more and more women join the workforce some men will be inevitably relegated to the home. It's time for society to do all it can to help men and boys accept a more humble future so some women can have a brighter one.

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