

Public Spending on Young Children and Families
in Canada:

***Distraction, Diversion or Down Payment
on Modernized Family Policy?***

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Human Early Learning Partnership

Prepared for the Early Development Imperative Conference

November 17, 2009

Winnipeg, Manitoba

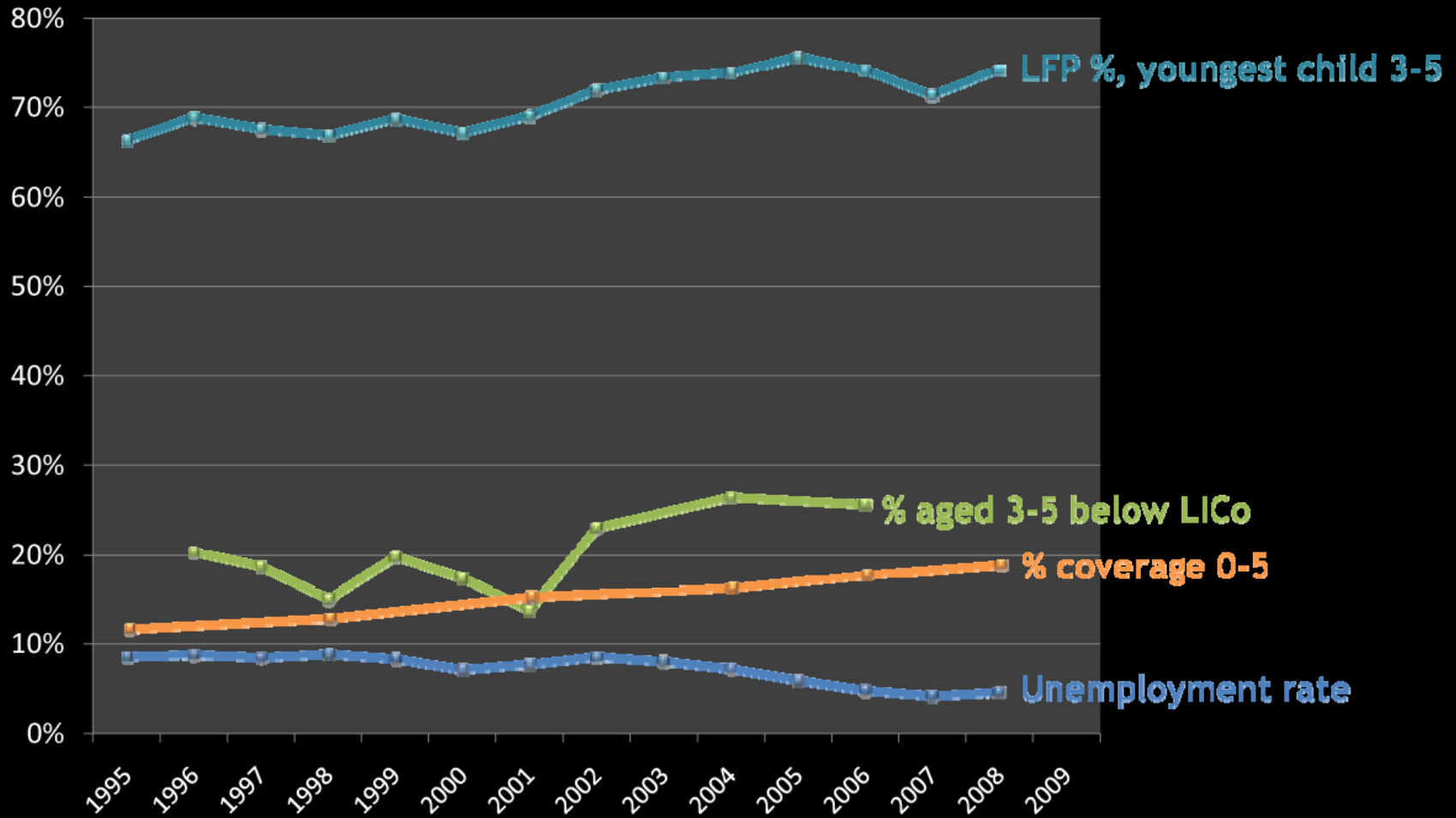
Let's start by being clear-eyed about parenting.

If we mindlessly build new tools around an inherited paradigm of two parent stable households, one job, and a parent present day and night to guide, educate and support their children, we may:

- waste lots of time on the periphery and fail to be relevant to the majority of parents ...
- miss opportunities to call on institutions, leaders and new technologies that can be part of the solution instead of adding to the problem.

Terry Meersman, Talaris Foundation, U.S.

BC Family Context & Trends



Research Meets Reality

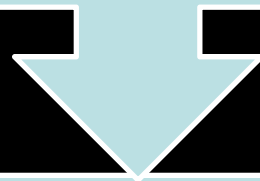
*... to make meaningful improvement in ... early child development ...
create **universal access** to ... the conditions for optimal development ...
stimulating and nurturing environments ...*

Hertzman and Irwin, 2007

Universal Access to Quality Environments

*Enable - **Family Time & Resources***

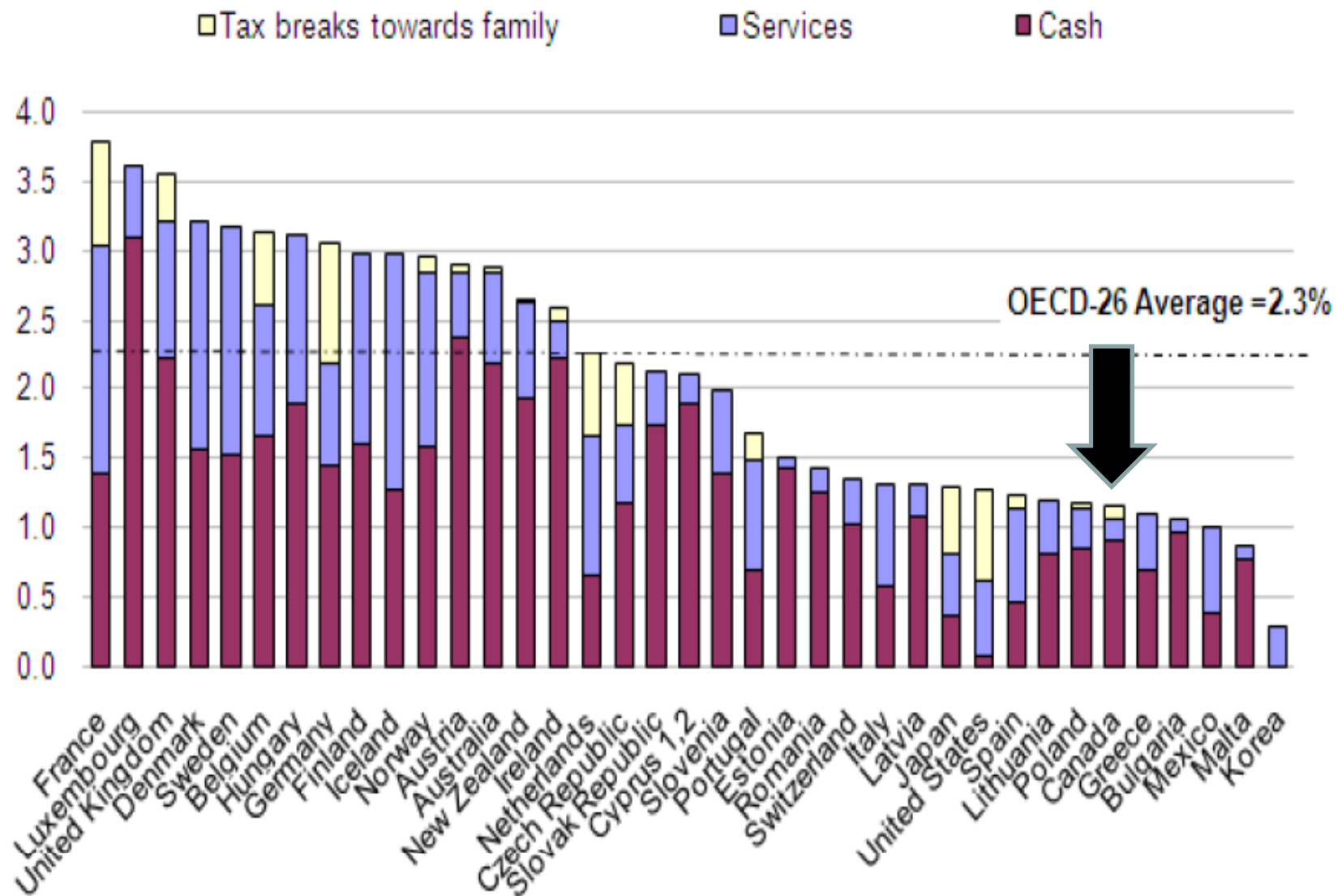
*Ensure - **Community Supports***



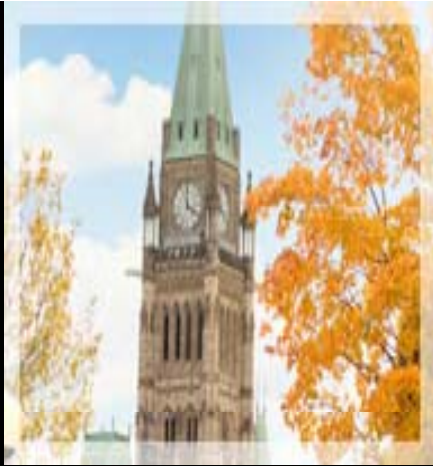
Requires:

1. **Public Investment**
2. **Public Accountability** – plan, with timelines, targets & benchmarks

Chart PF1.1: Public spending on family benefits in cash, services and tax measures, in per cent of GDP, 2005

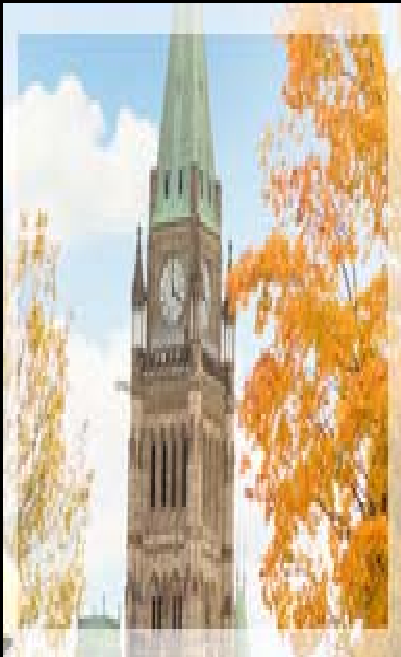


Notes: Data on tax support for families is not available for Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Mexico, Switzerland, Turkey and the non-OECD countries. Data for Portugal concerns 2003.



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with a **plan** — measuring, monitoring and
assessing performance, learning and adjusting ...
and publicly reporting on what was accomplished
(SORP-2, para 15)*

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*That, with November 24th, 2009 marking the
20th Anniversary of the 1989 unanimous
resolution of this House aiming to eliminate
poverty among Canadian children by the year
2000, a goal which was not achieved, be it
resolved that the Government of Canada
develop a **plan to eliminate poverty in Canada
for all, starting with achieving 50 per cent
reduction in poverty by 2020, while respecting
provincial and territorial jurisdictions ...***

Expected Motion of Federal HUMA C'tee, Nov 17/09



Postscript – Text of actual resolution passed unanimously in House of Commons Nov 24 2009 – note addition of ‘immediate’ but elimination of target “starting with achieving 50 per cent reduction in poverty by 2020”

*That, with November 24th, 2009 marking the 20th anniversary of the 1989 unanimous resolution of this House to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000, and not having achieved that goal, be it resolved that the Government of Canada, taking into consideration the Committee’s work in this regard, and respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, develop an **immediate** plan to eliminate poverty in Canada for all.*

Benchmark Category	UNICEF Report Card (2008)	Sweden	UK	US	Canada
Time	Parental leave-1 year, 50% avg salary, father time	1	0	0	0
Resources	Child poverty <10%	1	0	0	0
Supports: – Quality ECEC	Majority of staff trained; >3 staff/child ratios 1:15 min.	3	2	2	1
Supports – ECEC subsidized, with standards	25% of <3's & 80% of 4's access ECEC; near universal outreach of health services	3	2	1	0
Public Investment with Accountability	National plan, priority for disadvantaged; invest 1% of GDP in ECEC services	2	1	0	0
Total Marks	10	10	5	3	1