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*Extensive Canadian and international scientific evidence supports the following statements outlined in the **Letter of Support for Quality Childcare**:*

- *Investments in quality early childhood education have a high return on investment and the benefits far outweigh the costs.*
- *Such investments and policies promote economic growth and productivity through increased labour force participation, reduced social transfers, higher tax revenues, increased hours worked, and reduced workplace absenteeism.*
- *Among all educational periods, policies and investments targeting the early years generate the highest return on investment.*

The evidence below outlines both Canadian and International research.

Early childhood education and care is often discussed as a parental issue. But the benefits of quality early education go well beyond the value to the individual child and parent. Widespread access to early education has cascading effects and ultimately promotes productivity and economic efficiency. The economic value of equalizing educational opportunities and achievements is well documented.ⁱ

We need a competent and productive workforce that will contribute successfully to the economy. Lost human capital not only drains our economic and social resources, it also leaves behind a workforce that does not reach its potential.

Some public investments create social good AND promote economic productivity. Quality affordable early childhood education is one such policy.

As Canadian policy-makers and political leaders continue to debate the value of investing in early education, we cannot ignore Canadian and international research findings. Whether from the field of economics, psychology, education, health, medicine, or the neurosciences, it is widely agreed that high-quality early childhood education results in improvements in school readiness; in scholastic, social, and health outcomes for children and their families; and in economic benefits for society.ⁱⁱ

A comprehensive body of scientific research demonstrates that quality early education shows positive effectiveness on child language, literacy, and mathematical skills. Quality programs also improve socio-emotional challenges in children. Such

challenges are precursors to school dropout, adult mental health problems and criminality, and difficulties in workforce participation.ⁱⁱ As many as 25% of Canadian kindergarten children are identified as having socio-emotional challenges.ⁱⁱⁱ Quality early education not only improves these outcomes for children, but also acts as early identification promoting early intervention^{iv} and reducing the need for special needs interventions.^v Enduring benefits are particularly pronounced in those from disadvantaged families, dual-language children, and children from immigrant families.ⁱⁱ

The benefits of investing in early childhood education far outweigh the costs. International research shows that high-quality early education decreases expenditures on social assistance and transfers to families and increases economic production through increased adult earnings and tax revenues, indicating a prudent economic investment and one of the most cost-effective social programs.^{vi}

When early education is accessible and inclusive, and provides quality programming, maternal workforce participation increases. The result is not only increased economic productivity, it also helps close the gender wage gap, a gap that is most prominent when the presence and age of children are considered.^{vii}

A grown-in-Canada example is Ontario's full-day kindergarten program that began its rollout in 2010. With already one of the highest female labour force participation rates in the world, full-day kindergarten was shown to increase maternal work hours and decrease workplace absenteeism^{viii}—both proxies for productivity.

At the foundation of quality early learning are educators.¹ Early Childhood Educator (ECE) is the professional designation for individuals with post-secondary qualifications in early childhood development. Their knowledge, training, experience, and compensation are associated with program quality and are predictors of positive child outcomes.^{ix}

It has been clear for some time that quality early education yields more in benefits to society than its initial costs. Supranational organizations such as the World Bank^x and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) continue to identify it as a crucial tool to advance a range of family, child, and gender equality policy objectives.^{xi} It is important, however, that the child remains at the centre of such policy developments and that the achievement of other societal goals^{xii} goes hand in hand with economic benefits.

¹ Investments and policy developments in early education must consider the working conditions and compensation of the educators who provide the learning and care to children.

Endnotes

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^{xi} Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2023). *Early childhood education and care (ECEC): A vital component of the family policy framework in OECD countries*.

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^{xii} Bertram, T., & Pascal, C. (2002). Early years education: An international perspective. *International Review of Curriculum Assessment Frameworks Internet Archive*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/early-years-education-an-international-perspective/>