

OTTAWA— State-of-the-art estimates of the cost of raising children are the missing link for social policies and programs meant to support low income and middle class families, says Campaign 2000. Released today, Campaign 2000's new report, "Estimating the Cost of Raising Children: Setting the Agenda for Canada," outlines the need for official estimates to guide public policy and assist parents across Canada with planning.

"Right now, we don't have official estimates of what it costs to raise children," says Anita Khanna, Campaign 2000 national coordinator. "Calculating the real cost of raising children is central to crafting evidence-based child poverty reduction policies that support the healthy development of children. With federal consultations for the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy underway for the first time in Canada's history, it is time to fill this gap in public knowledge. We must ensure the realities of families' real-time expenses, such as food, housing, childcare, transit, schools fees and even saving for post-secondary education, inform policy directions and to help level the uneven playing field for families."

"The cost of raising children is referenced by politicians of all stripes seeking to support families, but how do we know if policies and programs are helping or helping enough if we have no standard to compare them to?" asks Dr. Sid Frankel, co-author. "Canadians need this information to help decide whether to have children or to plan for subsequent children. Governments, family courts, financial planners and the child welfare sector also need this information to set adequate levels of child benefits, child support payments and compensation for foster parents that are based on evidence."

In "[Estimating the Cost of Raising Children: Setting the Agenda for Canada](#)," authors Dr. Dana Bazarkulova, Dr. Karen Duncan and Dr. Sid Frankel provide a comprehensive overview of the importance and history of the topic and present the advantages and disadvantages of various methods used to calculate the costs. Accurate estimates of the cost of raising children are dependent on comprehensive measurement of the costs families face. Further, costs can differ based on ethno-cultural practices, geographic location, disability and health status of children and such variation requires recognition. The report highlights that different types of estimates are best used for different purposes.

"Creating state of the art estimates of the cost of raising children is within reach," says Dr. Karen Duncan. "Statistics Canada already collects data on what families spend and on the costs of goods and services, so it's a matter of building on these foundations to create valid and reliable estimates."

With the federal government committed to reducing child poverty plaguing over 1.3 million children in Canada and supporting families, there is no room for division and debate on this issue. "Canada needs to release official estimates of the cost of raising children that are based on the best available knowledge and evidence, including input from parents. With reliable estimates we can set effective targets and timelines to wipe out poverty," adds Khanna.

Campaign 2000 is a non-partisan, cross-Canada network of 120 national, provincial and community partner organizations committed to working to end child and family poverty. For more information, visit www.campaign2000.ca.

Media inquiries:

Anita Khanna, Campaign 2000: 416-788-3439

Liyu Guo, Campaign 2000: 416-624-1885