



March 15, 2021

The Important Role of Women in Canada's Post-pandemic Recovery

In recognition of International Women's Day, Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland [announced the creation of a new Task Force on Women in the Economy](#) to advance gender equality and address systematic barriers to women's economic and social equality.

We've seen how the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted women over the last twelve months. [A new report from RBC](#) found that almost half a million Canadian women who lost their jobs during the pandemic hadn't returned to work as of January 2021. In addition, more than 200,000 women have slipped into the ranks of the "long-term unemployed" which is a threefold increase over last year.

Minister Freeland's 18-member Task Force is an acknowledgment of the important role that women must play in Canada's post-pandemic economic recovery. It has been entrusted with advising the government on a "feminist, intersectional action plan" and recommending policies and measures to support women's employment.

The Minister noted that early learning and child care will be a powerful economic driver coming out of the pandemic and is expected to be a key focus of the Task Force. Early learning and child care "is a feminist issue. It is a mothers' issue. It's about caring for our children and giving them the best possible start in life," Ms. Freeland added.

With the Task Force expected to meet for the first time this month, we have a real opportunity to implement a high-quality, universal, publicly-funded and supported early learning and child care system in Canada. We need a system that:

- Provides universal access for all children, regardless of their parents' work status or income level;
- Offers a continuum of learning from early childhood into elementary and secondary schooling;
- Delivers stable, secure, sufficient and predictable funding to recruit, resource and retain a professional workforce and respond to changing community needs;
- Links to auxiliary professionals to support children with unique needs and families in distress; and,
- Includes public infrastructure for safe, child friendly facilities, for planning, research, and system assessment and quality improvement.

We applaud the government for taking this important step and look forward to following the Task Force's progress in the weeks to come.

To learn more about the new Task Force on Women and the Economy, [click here](#). You can also learn more about how we can build a high-quality, universal, publicly funded and supported ELCC system at: <https://earlyyearsstudy.ca/>

Regards,

Hon. Margaret Norrie McCain