

Ottawa Journal: building on support for Canadian families

Since 2006, our Government has provided significant tax relief for families. In fact, we've cut taxes over 160 times saving the average family \$3,400 every year. It's a record that we're proud many Canadian families have benefitted from. For example, almost a million-and-a-half families have taken advantage of the Children's Fitness Tax Credit and approximately 1.7 million families with young children receive the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB).

However, our Government is always looking for new ways to help. This is why we're working to put even more cash back into the pockets of hard-working Canadian families. We're building on our record with new measures that will continue to help offset the costs of raising a family, such as child care and sports activities.

First, we are introducing the new Family Tax Cut. Since we have had such success with income splitting for seniors, we are now offering a similar initiative for families. According to the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, such an initiative has been implemented in countries around the world, including: France, Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and the United States. Furthermore, such a measure is generally supported by Canadians and has even received support across party lines. The Family Tax Cut will allow the higher-earning parent to, in effect, transfer taxable income to the other parent who is in a lower tax bracket, up to a maximum benefit of \$2,000. This will enhance fairness by treating families with the same overall incomes in a comparable way and gives Canadian families the ability to make their own choices because this measure puts more money back into their pockets.

We are also introducing an increase and expansion of the UCCB. We are proud that since 2006, the UCCB has delivered choice for parents when it comes to child care. We are now increasing the benefit to \$160 per month per child under the age of six or \$1,920 per year. We're also delivering a new benefit of \$60 per month, or \$720 per year, per child aged six through seventeen.

Approximately four million families are expected to benefit from the enhancements to the UCCB.

We are also increasing each of the Child Care Expense Deduction dollar limits by \$1,000. This is the initiative that allows child care expenses to be deducted from taxable income if the child care is due to the parent working, going to school, or performing research. The limits will be increased to \$8,000 from \$7,000 per child under age seven, \$5,000 from \$4,000 for each child aged seven to sixteen (and infirm dependent children over age sixteen), and \$11,000 from \$10,000 for children who are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit.

Finally, our Government previously announced changes to the Children's Fitness Tax Credit. We are doubling the amount parents can claim for enrolling their children in sports activities to \$1,000 and as of the 2015 tax year, the credit will be refundable, increasing the benefit for low-income families who claim it that year and subsequent years.

Our Government is focused on continuing to stand up for families.

By David Tilson, M.P.