

BENCHMARKS TO PROGRESS IN REDUCING CHILD POVERTY

Reducing child and family poverty requires “time-bound targets”¹ and “a comprehensive, well-funded, multi-year, multi-jurisdictional plan”².

For the Campaign Against Child Poverty, a successful child poverty reduction strategy must include three critical benchmarks or elements: early learning and childcare; stable affordable housing; and income security for Canadians with jobs or on social assistance:

1. **Make Early Learning and Child Care facilities accessible, available, and affordable in every region of the country.** This is one of the critical factors known to contribute to the low child/family poverty rates in the European countries that have reduced child poverty.
2. **Include Provisions for Affordable Housing in agreements with the Provinces, Territories, and Municipalities.** Canada’s vast geography means that shelter initiatives will be different across the country. Even so, every child and family, indeed every member of our society, should be housed adequately and have security in their living arrangements.
3. **Living Wage Rates and Income Security should be recognized as investments in civil society.** This step involves cooperation with employers as well as government policy, but the benefit to society is a workforce that is committed to the job. Equally important, wages that lift the earner above the poverty line add an incentive for young people to stay in school and to take additional training. And income security must mean ‘good jobs’ with wages that provide a standard of living where we all live ‘out of poverty’.

¹ UNICEF Report: Child Poverty in Rich Countries 2005

² Campaign 2000’s Pathways to Progress 2004: Structural Solutions to Address Child Poverty