

The special challenges involved in caring for and protecting children in today's world are being met through a broad range of services provided by both government and non-governmental sources. The federal government supports a broad-ranging program, undertaken in 1992, to advance the interests of children. This initiative, called Brighter Futures, is based on four principles: early intervention, partnerships among all sectors of society, the primary importance of children and parents, and the targeting of support to those in greatest need.

In addition to federal funding for the program, a number of support services are cost-shared with the provinces through the Canada Assistance Plan. Municipalities are also engaged in support of families, providing community centres and a variety of outreach programs. As well, several voluntary organizations are devoting increased efforts to meeting the needs of children,

furnishing homemakers and home support counselling, rehabilitation and adoption services. Of special importance are measures to protect abused or neglected children. Reflecting a growing trend toward collaboration between NGOs in pursuit of a specific objective, the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children unites more than 50 organizations in the common cause of support for children's rights.

An example of provincial efforts in this area is Quebec's family policy which rests on the following principles: recognition of the family as a basic collective value, cohesion and stability of the family, parental responsibility and the interests of the child. Its government takes the reality of the family into account in a number of areas, including economic support for the costs of child rearing, housing, organization of work, relations between school and family, social and health services, and family law.