

Advocate for Children and Youth Wants All Children to Benefit from the New Canada Child Benefit

SASKATOON—Bob Pringle, Saskatchewan’s Advocate for Children and Youth, is quite concerned about recent reports that many children may be missing out on the new *Canada Child Benefit* due to the eligibility criteria. He believes the rollout of the program is a positive step forward for children and youth in low income families in Saskatchewan. However, the benefit is based on the previous year’s income tax return, and Pringle hopes “the government does all it can to ensure that all children are treated equally and that the government has contingencies for families who may not file income tax returns. Many of these families are the most in need for this type of assistance”.

Beginning yesterday, cheques were sent out to families with children under the new *Canada Child Benefit* which replaces the *Canada Child Tax Benefit*, *The National Child Benefit*, and *The Universal Care Benefit*. The new *Canada Child Benefit* is tax free and pays up to \$6,400 per child under the age of six and up to \$5,400 per child for children between six and 17 years of age. In Saskatchewan, a typical family with three young kids would receive an extra \$315 per month under the new plan.

Pringle says “we know that there is a direct correlation between poverty and health and well-being, therefore it is imperative that we continue to work to ensure that all children and youth have a high quality of life”.

Pringle is “pleased that the office was afforded an opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed program and made it clear that any changes to the existing support needed to be directed at the families most in need”. But, he cautions that while “the new program is a step in the right direction, a lot more needs to be done to meet the promise made unanimously by the House of Commons in 1989 to eradicate child poverty in Canada by the year 2000. One program is not going to solve the problem and we need all levels of government committed to working together with that common goal in mind”.

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