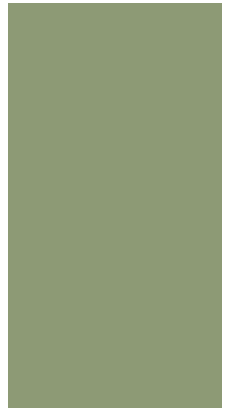
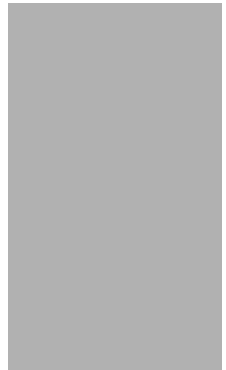


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# Families and Children

Strengthening Families To Secure Alberta's Future



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## Wildrose Caucus

Get it Right!

# Families

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Strong families are the foundation of the past, present, and future of Alberta. As a province, we should make every effort to support families and the challenges they face. We must ensure all government programs and incentives assist, rather than hinder, the ability of parents to provide for and spend more quality time with their children.

There are, of course, many instances where families are in crisis: addictions, mental health issues, family violence, and relationship breakdowns can have serious and even tragic repercussions for all family members. When this occurs, it is critical to protect the interests of the children involved. Among other things, this means ensuring that children are safe, maintenance and access orders are expeditiously enforced, adequate child care is available and, in extreme circumstances, children are placed in stable and caring foster homes.



Although family and community organizations are often able to provide assistance in circumstances of family breakdown (and should be encouraged to do so), this is an area where the provincial government must be actively involved to ensure the protection of those unable to defend or care for themselves.

But the current government has not adequately served children and families in need. Social workers are overburdened, foster parents are unappreciated, child care options are limited, and the tax system penalizes stay-at-home parents. And when good legislation is passed, like the *Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Amendment Act*, 2009, the government lets it sit on a shelf without implementation.



# Get it Right

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Alberta's families and children deserve better. A Wildrose government would address the needs of families and children by implementing the following policies:

- **Encourage the federal government to accelerate their plan to allow income splitting between parents. Currently, single income families with a parent at home caring for their children, are penalized under federal taxation laws.**
- **Review federal and provincial tax law to identify other ways in which the law unfairly penalizes families with children, and work to implement tax reforms that will lessen the financial burdens they face.**
- **Review the entire spectrum of child care options, including daycare, day homes, pre-school, after-school care, kinship care and others, and identify ways to increase access and reduce unnecessary barriers. For example, the review should include an examination of standards so those with extensive practical child care experience are more easily accredited.**
- **Make government child care grants more flexible in what type of child care they can be used for, while ensuring they are better targeted to parents with the most financial need (particularly single parents with low incomes).**
- **Introduce family law reforms that will improve compliance with both maintenance and visitation orders.**



- Fully review our foster care system and group homes to ensure that safety, training, compensation, and caseload levels are set at the highest standards possible. It is also essential that foster parents are treated with the utmost respect and feel valued for the critical service they provide.
- Invest in proven community organizations and programs that work to prevent, assist and treat victims of addictions and abuse. A significant amount of gambling revenues should be reallocated for these investments.
- Immediately proclaim the *Protection of Children Abusing Drugs Amendment Act, 2009*
- The Children’s Advocate should be independent and be accountable to all children in the province. A report should be tabled in the legislature once a year.
- Caseload management needs to be reviewed to ensure social workers are not overburdened.
- Ensure wrap-around services are available for youth by using a team approach with social workers and service providers.
- Establish a dedicated Family Resource Centre hotline to provide a source for information, outreach services, and community supports to relieve unnecessary pressure from our Emergency 911 system.



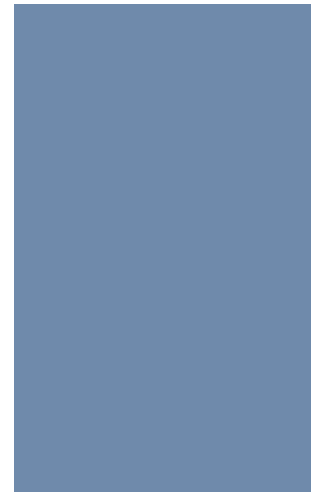
- **Ensure a full spectrum of child and youth services are available to protect the child while working towards reunification where possible and provide supportive living alternatives where not.**
- **The cultural needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis children are of particular importance when intervening through use of residential care. There needs to be a clear direction and mandate that allows all aboriginal children to stay connected with their families and their communities. Connection may take diverse forms and will be assessed and determined based on the individual needs of the child and the input, expertise and knowledge of the First Nation, Inuit and Métis people.**

Albertans believe strongly that our most vulnerable need to be protected. The services must be there when they are needed. Children and families are essential to the well-being of everyone in our province and the better they cope with and overcome setbacks, the more they can make a positive contribution to our communities.



*For the Wildrose Caucus' Families and Children, and other policies, go to:*

[Wildrose Caucus Policies](#)



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