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UMI
Child Care, Ontario Politics, And The Agenda-Setting Process

by

Chaya Kulkarni

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Theory and Policy Studies
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

CHILD CARE, ONTARIO POLITICS, AND THE AGENDA-SETTING PROCESS

Doctor of Education

1998

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The intent of this study is to identify some of the variables that have influenced the agenda-setting process of a provincial government specific to social policy issues, by examining the dynamics that have surrounded child care policy in Ontario. A conceptual framework was proposed to aid in identifying variables and the nature of interaction among variables. The conceptual framework was proposed to illustrate the nature of the dynamics and the relationships that were revealed through the data analysis.

Key-informant interview data led to revisions that more accurately reflected the influential variables and their impact on the agenda-setting process. Primary data sources included a review of newspaper articles on child care and Hansard from the Ontario legislature. Interviews with key informants also yielded unique data.

Results suggest that the social policy agenda-setting process issues, can be influenced by variables such as (but not limited to) ideology, media, economics, and public opinion. Independently and collectively such variables appear to influence the
feasibility, legitimacy, and support of a particular issue as well as the political leadership given to the issue. Ultimately, this has an impact on the agenda.

Further investigation of the nature of the dynamics could add to our understanding of the agenda-setting process. Participants in the agenda-setting process may be able to more effectively influence the agendas of governments by focusing their efforts on those variables most likely to lead to the desired outcome in terms of the agenda.
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Chapter 1
Context of Study

Introduction

As the social fabric of Canada changes, existing policies as well as new policies are being examined by all levels of government with a view to reform. The struggle for a place on the political agenda can be considerable. This study will use an extensive examination of child care in Ontario to uncover some of the variables and dynamics surrounding the agenda-setting process through. It is hoped that this focused examination on one area of social policy will be helpful in understanding the agenda-setting process as it may apply to other areas of social policy.

This investigation will include: (1) an historical overview of Ontario’s child care system; (2) a review of literature related to the politics of policy making and the variables that may influence the political agenda; (3) an examination of political parties and their positions on child care; (4) a summary of data collected from interviews with former Ministers and, Deputy Ministers, child care advocates, and former civil servants regarding various aspects of the agenda-setting process; (5) a summary of data collected from an analysis of legislative Hansard and newspaper coverage on the child care issue; and (6) a set of observations on politics surrounding Ontario’s child care system, and its implications for understanding variables that influence the agenda-setting process as applied to child care and other related social policy issues.

Such a study can potentially serve two purposes. First, within the broader field of policy studies, this examination furthers our knowledge of the systems and dynamics of
the processes surrounding social policy development. Second, in this context, the findings of this study are relevant for examination of areas such as education, child welfare, or other aspects of social policy. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the evolving knowledge on how governments and policy makers approach social policy issues and determine which ones will be on the political agenda. What variables influence the inclusion or exclusion of an issue on political agendas? How do political parties respond to different variables? This study will attempt to begin to answer such questions.

About the Debate

In recent decades, child care has become an important political issue in many countries including Canada and the United States. Public opinion polls record that citizens in both countries feel that government should do more to ensure the care of young children (Barker, 1991; Peters, 1998). Furthermore, child care is increasingly being seen by governments locally, and internationally, as a variable that significantly influences a government’s economic and social justice objectives as well as the achievement of those objectives.

For many working parents child care is a concern. While some will worry about accessibility, others will be concerned with affordability and quality or perhaps all three. As another Ontario government contemplates the introduction of changes to Ontario’s child care system, those families using licensed child care facilities wonder if changes will make the system more or less accessible, higher or lower in terms of standards and quality, and more or less expensive.
The debate around the funding and delivery of child care services has been recharged by recent research findings. Research on brain development has found the first three years of life to be critical in the development of a child’s brain (Begley, 1997). In a review of literature, Doherty (1997) refers to “school readiness” as “a child’s ability to meet the task demands of school, such as sitting quietly and listening to the teacher, and to assimilate the curriculum content” (p. 13). Many of the skills essential to school readiness, such as essential language and cognitive skills, are developed and mastered between birth and age six – a time many children spend in the care of others. The importance of the child’s experiences during the early years is now being seen as critical. Those who have held the view that relevant learning begins in kindergarten are now being challenged by current research.

Waiting lists of thousands of children in need of subsidized child care suggest that many early years services and programs still remain inaccessible to a greater number of families suggesting an inadequate response by the Ontario government. Government policy papers echo a more targeted approach to access. A government white paper, *Restructuring Services for Children and Youth* (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1997) presents a more targeted approach to the access of many children’s services in the province primarily based on socio-economic status. It suggests that only those Ontario families in greatest need will be offered government assistance when accessing services ranging from child care to speech and language therapy.

More specific to child care a 1996 government white paper, *Improving Ontario’s Child Care System* (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1996) on proposed changes to Ontario’s current child care system suggests a less regulated system, less
government funding for staff wages, and increased reliance on the commercial and informal sectors. Some players, including advocates, parents, and policy makers, believe that these changes will take child care many steps backwards. For others, changes to the existing child care system and how it is funded may lead to more government aid to address the cost of child care. While this white paper was to guide child care reform, to date no changes have resulted which may suggest a growing awareness among government policy-makers about the importance of the early years.

The arena in which policy-makers and governments place child care may also have a profound impact on many families in Ontario. Some governments have placed child care in the community and social services arena of policy development. Others have placed it within both the education and community and social services arena at the same time. Those viewing it strictly as a social service have supported policies and programs that primarily target services to the poor, while others see it as an employment support and educational opportunity for all working families. Those linking it to the education system have supported policies that strive to make the service more educational, accessible, and affordable to a greater number of families. As Gormley (1995) notes “Government has the capacity to shape the child care industry profoundly if it wishes to do so” (p. 7). An historical review of the focus of provincial child care policy illustrates that political parties, as government, have viewed child care in different ways ranging from an employment support to a valuable educational experience for young children. Table 1-1 provides a chronological account of child care during the past two decades and the nature of the policy thrust.
**Table 1.1: Summary Chart**  
*A Chronology of Events in the Development of Child Care Policy*  
*From 1974 to the Present*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1974 | Conservative| Conservative Margaret Birth, then Provincial Secretary for Social Development, issued Ontario's first major policy statement about child care in the Ontario legislature. The paper, which also represented the then Conservative government's view of child care, stated that:  
- Government supported child care was considered a welfare service only for those with the greatest need  
- Child care was to complement kindergarten programs  
- Standards such as staff ratios and professional training requirements for staff could be reduced since parents had none of these qualifications | Child Welfare                                 |
| 1974 | Conservative| A number of public activities, including demonstrations inside the legislature, pressured the government to withdraw its proposed reduction of standards. This also united the child care community and identified common goals. | Support to employment/ Women's equality       |
| 1975-76| Conservative| To address the public outcry that arose from the Birch report, the Advisory Council on Day Care was formed. In its first report (January, 1975), the Council identified three objectives for child care services:  
1) A service for children – safe, healthy, developmental, enriching, nurturing, preventative;  
2) A service for families – support for parents needing surrogate child care for any one of a variety of reasons;  
3) A community service – one of a network of services to families and children, interrelated and enhancing the general welfare of the community (as cited in Pence, 1991, p. 375)  
The final report was submitted in January, 1976. The Council was unable to fulfil its mandate as then Minister of Community and Social Services terminated the Council attributing this action to a need for a federal review of social services and the funding of these services. Speculation at the time was that the report contradicted the government's philosophy and would have required considerable funding. | Support to Employment/ Educational Development |
<p>| 1978 | Conservative| Government released a paper that identified a number of possible objectives for child care but provided no recommendations or analysis about what should be adopted. | Support to Employment                          |
| 1980 | Conservative| Government released a paper addressing a number of outstanding issues related to the quality of care. After a review of the public response, new standards and guidelines were approved and implementation began in 1983. | Support to Employment                          |
| 1981 |              | In 1981 a number of provincial organizations, including the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario, the Canadian | Support to Employment/ Women's equality       |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Event/Description</th>
<th>Issue Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>The Ministry of Community and Social Services released a paper which provided a history and overview of child care programs, identified services and funding issues, and set priorities for future work.</td>
<td>Support to Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>To address the problems identified in the government paper, Day Care Initiatives (later to be called Child Care Initiatives) was established. This provided funds to expand licensed group and private-home day care and increase the number of subsidies available to low-income families as well as to test out &quot;family group care&quot; and encourage parent-run and workplace day care. In addition funding was extended to resource centres. The paper also adopted a joint service planning approach for child care with the two largest municipalities, Ottawa-Carleton and Metropolitan Toronto. This agreement soon ran aground due to the Ministry's unwillingness to commit to multi-year funding. One significant change due to this initiative was the funding of parent education, resource centres, and caregiver support initiatives. In addition, the funding of informal child care was initiated - a controversial issue then due to the lack of supervision, a controversial issue now for the same reason.</td>
<td>Support to Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Through Day Care Initiatives the Ministry of Community and Social Services designed programs to help sole support parents on social assistance prepare to return to work or seek employment. For the first time the government recognized that help with child care arrangements was required if employment programs were to be effective.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984 - 1985</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>The legislature directed the Standing Committee on Social Development &quot;to consider the principle and terms of the Day Nurseries Act&quot; (Kyle et al. 1991, p. 380), and to make recommendations to the Minister of Community and Social Services. This was primarily in response to concerns raised by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and other advocacy groups about the omission of day nursery programs from the proposed Child and Family Services Act. This was also a significant event as it emphasized the emerging view of child care as a necessary and comprehensive system for all families as opposed to a welfare service for those of low socio-economic status.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Educational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>In March, 1985 the Conservative government announced Enterprise Ontario as part of a pre-election package. It included $30 million to provide for 7,500 additional full-time subsidized spaces over two years and $22 million to fund Child Care Initiatives as part of a larger strategy to ensure job creation and support job training. Soon after the announcement of Enterprise Ontario, the Conservative government was defeated in an election after 42 years in office.</td>
<td>Support to Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>The Liberals formed a new minority government with the cooperation of the NDP and the signing of a working agreement, the Accord, which represented a combination of new initiatives from both parties. This agreement emphasized the emerging view of child care as not only a support to employment for families, but also a developmentally beneficial program for children, and a basic public service.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Educational Development/ Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>The Select Committee on Social Development was asked to consider the issue of funding for commercial day care programs. However, its final report contained 25 recommendations on several issues including monitoring inspections, quality of care, accountability, the need for expansion of child care spaces, cost sharing, and affordability. Ultimately, the committee did not make a definitive statement on the role of commercial programs (a very controversial issue then and now), although many recommendations suggest that future expansion of spaces and start-up funds should be directed to non-profit programs only.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Educational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>The Throne Speech of April 28th, 1987 reaffirmed the government's commitment to child care as a public service. In June of the same year, New Directions for Child Care, the promised new policy, was announced. The document outlined the government's &quot;...commitment to building a comprehensive child care system that will meet the needs of all citizens: a system that would move child care from a welfare connotation toward one of public service&quot; (NDP/Liberal Accord, 1985). This also marked the beginning of the biggest expansion of the not for profit child care centre with a policy requiring all newly built schools to include space for child care.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Educational Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>The Liberal government introduced pay equity legislation to cover workplaces where there were male comparisons and promised to address those places where there were not, such as child care, through another mechanism.</td>
<td>Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>In recognition of the professional aspect of child care and the poor wages earned by providers, the government announced the first wage enhancement program for child care staff – the Direct Operating Grant (DOG). This initiative increased wages by as much as $5,000 per staff annually. The DOG was also used as a way to expand the not for profit child care sector since profit centres only received 50% of the allocation.</td>
<td>Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The NDP government was elected and universal child care was seen as a major thrust of their election campaign.</td>
<td>Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The NDP government amended the pay equity legislation to include proxy and proportional adjustments to address those places where there were no male comparisons.</td>
<td>Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>With the NDP in power a new emphasis was placed on the sponsorship issue surrounding child care. In 1992 the government announced that new subsidies would only be directed to the non-profit sector. In addition, the NDP government announced a second wage-enhancement package that would be limited to non-profit centres only and would increase staff salaries by a maximum of $2,000 annually – this was also seen as the down-payment on pay equity. In addition, the commercial sector was presented with a process for conversion to non-profit status with a $72 million fund (this was originally proposed by the Liberals in New Directions).</td>
<td>Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The opposition Liberals ask the Social Development Committee of the legislature to examine the impact of the conversion on women – both those working in the field and those owning centres. Both the Liberals and NDP presented dissenting reports noting that the NDP policy favoured non-profit centres and negatively impacted all women in commercial centres. The NDP did not change its policy.</td>
<td>Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The NDP released a public consultation paper on child care reform. Consultations were held across the province. Ultimately no action was taken.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Educational Developmental/ Public Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The NDP announced the Royal Commission on Learning. One of the areas to be considered was the area of early childhood education.</td>
<td>Educational Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The Royal Commission on Learning presented its report to the government. Several key recommendations dealt with the early years. The Commission saw the availability of an early years program for children three and older as a great equalizer for disadvantaged children and a beneficial experience for all children.</td>
<td>Educational Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The NDP announced the creation of pilot programs for the early years – but beginning at age four not three.</td>
<td>Educational Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Department</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>The Conservatives publicly stated their view of the absurdity of the recommendations by the Commission concerning the early years. In their view, such young children did not belong in school.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>On June 8th, 1995 the Conservatives were returned to office. The only commitments to child care in Conservative election material were for parental choice and the provision of some subsidy for unwed/teen mothers.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Soon after the election the Conservatives announced the end of the conversion package and the flowing of fee subsidies to all centres regardless of auspices. At the same time it was announced that Janet Ecker, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services would be undertaking consultation on child care reform.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Conservative government announced $200 million for child care over five years.</td>
<td>Support to Employment/Child Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Janet Ecker, now Minister of Community and Social Services, released a report recommending a number of changes to the current child care system. Highlights of changes included a reduction in government support for staff salaries, increased ratios, and capital grants for the private sector. This was seen a move to fully privatize child care targeting assistance only to low-income families.</td>
<td>Child Welfare/Support to Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>The Conservatives admit that the $200 million commitment made the previous year was not observed and commit to spending $400 million to finance a tax credit.</td>
<td>Developmental</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past, advocates such as the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the Canadian Child Care Advocacy Association, and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women have advocated for greater government involvement in child care. In contrast, those who have advocated for less governmental involvement wish to see a more market-driven system. This is a key element of the debate. Against this backdrop, this research will explore how political agendas are influenced, the variables that have swayed politicians' views one way or another about child care, and the policies that have resulted. Since all three dominant political parties -- Conservatives, Liberals, and New Democrats -- have had an opportunity to govern Ontario between 1983 and 1996, this study will focus on that time period.

The groundswell of interest and concern for child care parallels the basic demographic, economic, and social changes that have occurred in Canada. For the last several decades, various factors including changing philosophical, political, and social views have had, and continue to have, an impact on the evolution of social policy in general and child care policy in particular. Within Ontario during the past two decades, the debate on child care among the public, politicians, and policy makers has steadily evolved and has heightened.

The Canadian National Child Care Survey (Kyle, Biemiller, Bratty, Lero, Friendly, Russell, 1990) found that nearly 90% of those children needing care are in the unlicensed, unregulated sector. The survey found the majority of families are not satisfied with their child care arrangements and would prefer alternate arrangements. High costs, inadequate access, and inflexibility are reasons parents cite for their use of the informal sector. At the same time, many Ontario families apply for governmental
assistance to address the high cost only to find their names placed on lengthy waiting lists.

Governmental response to the child care debate has varied during the past 25 years and appears to have been influenced by a number of factors. Actions such as increased government funding for child care spaces, and the establishment of workplace centres in a few corporations suggest that both the government’s and the corporate sectors’ approach to child care policy has changed significantly. There has been an expansion of workplace centres during the past decade, but the demand still exceeds supply. Yet, despite these changes, in Metropolitan Toronto alone, thousands of children are unable to benefit from a licensed child care program due to inadequate government subsidies. In 1998 Metro Children’s Services had thousands of children on a waiting list for subsidized child care. Provincial downloading together with the amalgamation of a number of municipalities across Ontario will further compound this. It is expected that municipalities will try to cut costs through reductions in child care expenditures. In some cases this may mean less subsidy and in others, it could result in the loss of fee subsidized spaces. This strongly implies that governments influence the kinds of resources that parents are able to access. Along these lines, Gormley (1995) observed that the role of government could indeed be significant:

It (government) can encourage or discourage group day care centres, family day care homes, for-profit centres, church-based centres, care by relatives, neighbours, or friends. It can compete directly with private providers through government centres. It can compete indirectly through programs in public schools. It can pick winners and losers or maintain strict neutrality. (Gormley, 1995, p. 7)

During the past 25 years the following issues have characterized the debate on child care:
1) concern about the government’s role in the provision of child care services;  
2) the question of whose responsibility child care is;  
3) the availability of child care services; and  
4) the effect of child care on child development.

These issues have been further compounded by the ideological, political, and economic elements of the time. While participation in the labour force may have increased, the views towards child care as a private versus a public problem are still diverse. In an article appearing in Policy Options, Friendly (1997) notes, while many European countries have established government supported early childhood programs, Canada continues to lag behind. France has led the way with early childhood services available for children from infancy to six free of charge. Children two to six years of age attend a more educational based program than those under two (in terms of content). Those countries choosing to invest in early childhood education recognize it as a key strategy in the promotion of healthy child development for all children. As will be developed in subsequent chapters, in contrast to the argument that places child care services in the realm of essential public service, the argument arises that children are in general a woman’s issue: women choose to have children and therefore should be prepared to bear the responsibility. From this perspective, child care is a "private" problem, and as such, should be addressed through the private sector with public dollars directed only to those most in need. In this vein, Klein (1991) holds:

The very idea of expanding beyond the family for a solution to the child care problem ignites much strife because adults are in conflict over their own priorities in arriving at a decision about where and how to provide care for the young. This debate is forever present, below the surface, laden with the many conflicting values left unarticulated. (p. 323)
Whether early childhood services are developed as private or public services will significantly impact how they are delivered. Ontario currently has a system more akin to a market-driven approach with the relatively limited government contribution targeted to low-income families.

Extending this point, Gormley (1995) suggests child care in North America remains a largely private issue to be resolved within the family or that community. He states that the fundamental premises historically used were that:

1) most young children would be cared for during the day by their mothers, with supplementary assistance from relatives, neighbours, and friends;
2) most families would remain intact over an extended period of time;
3) most wives would remain at home until their children reach the age of five or six;
4) most families would have close relatives nearby; and
5) most families would be firmly anchored in a supportive community. (Gormley, 1995, p. 2)

Teghtsoonian (1996) notes that premises such as these have influenced child care policy in Canada and have been responsible for the limited response by governments to the problem of accessible, affordable child care. So while Canadians and governments appear to encourage women to participate in the labour market through initiatives such as employment equity, essential services such as high quality, licensed, child care remain largely unavailable to the majority.

This research will focus on contemporary Ontario and will examine the variables and the people who have influenced child care as an item on the political agenda from 1983 to early 1996.
Why Discuss Child Care in the Education Context?

Some individuals may question the study of the child care issue within the education domain. I would like to provide a rationale for choosing to complete my research within the department of Educational Administration (now the Department of Theory and Policy Studies) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. While there is no obvious link between the care of young children and our school system, historically, this was not always the case. In one of the earliest versions of the Education Act (as cited by Corbett, 1998), kindergartens in the province of Ontario were originally conceived for children three years and up. The intent of the legislation was, “To make regulations for the organization of schools for children between three and five years of age, to be known as Kindergarten.” (Corbett, 1998). This passage suggests recognition by policy makers of the day of the need for early schooling over a century ago.

Currently, most Ontario school boards provide junior kindergarten despite the fact that it is not mandatory in Ontario. Each school board is at liberty to determine whether or not it will provide the program and the design of the program (some programs may be half days five days a week and others full days twice a week etc.). Child care is a service currently regulated through the Day Nurseries Act (1984) and enforced by the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS). Between 1987 and 1996 the only responsibility schools had to the child care system dealt with a policy requiring all new schools to be built with child care centres within. This led to one of greatest child care expansions in Ontario and in the not for profit child care sector. The Conservative
government, elected in 1995, revoked this policy. Nevertheless, some school boards, particularly those in large urban centres, have continued to support the inclusion of child care centres in their environments. The age group served through such programs varies from infants and toddlers to school age. For those in the school system, such services often provide “wrap around” care that supplements the child’s school day. School-based centres mean less transition for the child, and can also mean more consistency among caregivers and teachers. Yet, in light of the lack of any statutory requirement upon the education system, why should this issue be of concern to students within the educational administration department?

The first reason involves a bias of the researcher who agrees with recent findings (Doherty, 1997) showing high quality child care as an early education program rather than a program that provides only care. There has recently been an explosion of new research about the development of the child brain, also tells us how important the first three years of a child's life are in terms of brain development (Cyander and Mustard, 1997). The brain development that occurs during this time period, and the subsequent learning potential that exists at this time, surpasses any other period in a child's life. These years must be treated as precious and critical in helping each child achieve his or her potential. Hence, for this researcher, child care should be early childhood education that is based on an understanding of not only child development in all areas, but with an emphasis on the cognitive capacity and potential of each child.

The second reason has been echoed in the work of others and has to do with our society’s philosophy of education. Manzer (1994) suggests that “In how they are organized and what they teach public schools also express conceptions of human needs,
make statements of moral principles, and convey visions of individual and collective development” (p. 3). After all, in theory, we profess to be a society that values young children. Yet, despite countless studies revealing the importance of the early years, our practices do not consistently support what we claim -- in today’s jargon, we do not “walk the talk.” In 1994 the Royal Commission on Learning, commissioned by the Ontario government (NDP at the time), strongly recommended the inclusion of children three years and older in the school system. This was largely based on an increasing volume of research about the benefits of early childhood education, especially in the case of disadvantaged children. In their report, the Commissioners wrote:

And we believe that contact with the formal schooling system could profitably begin even sooner than it does. We have been impressed by a substantial amount of persuasive research that suggest that if kids began school a year earlier - at three years, instead of junior kindergarten at four, and full-time instead of half-time - their future educational development would be positively affected. (Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, p. 11)

The provincial Conservative government has since cancelled any work within the civil service related to this recommendation. These projects were to place children in the school system earlier and provide more time in junior and senior kindergarten programs. The media response to the recommendations in this area primarily focused on unfavourable editorial cartoons of young children in diapers sitting behind desks.

In view of the emerging literature on brain development and school readiness (Doherty, 1997), the importance of the child’s experiences are potentially critical in the child’s ‘school readiness.’ Those who once believed that the relevant learning began in kindergarten and later are now being informed that in fact, a child’s development is the result of the interaction of “genetic endowment, physiological maturation, and active
engagement with the environment” (p. 39). In addition, notes Doherty (1997), each developmental stage is dependent on the preceding stage. Finally, she concludes that much of the knowledge base and skills required for adult competence is laid down during the first six years of life. Doherty (1997) developed a flow of interactions to reflect the feedback loop (see Figure 1-1) that influences school readiness.
Figure 1-1
Doherty's Determinants of School Readiness and Later School Achievement

- Child's innate abilities and temperament
- Child's experience within and outside the home
- Child's physiological maturation level
- Classroom experience
- School readiness
- School achievement
- Experience with peers
poverty (1997) also refers to literature on critical periods, noting that different areas of the brain mature at different times. In this area, the work of Prasad and Cynader (1994) found that there are critical periods which “turn on” in some brain neurons at a typical age and “turn off” at a later age when the critical period wanes. Begley (1996) identified elements of vision, emotional control, social skills, language, cognitive skills, and response skills as areas having critical periods during the first five years. In each of the areas cited by Begley, the critical period begins to wane by age six.

This research clearly demonstrates a new understanding of the importance of the early years. Such knowledge is prompting many educators and social policy thinkers to re-evaluate how we treat a child’s early experience. That is, when we talk about child care, is the only concern one of safety or should we be equally concerned about the provision of a developmentally appropriate and stimulating environment?

The Link Between Child Care, Education and Government Policy

In 1996 the Standing Committee on Social Development of the Ontario Provincial Legislature examined children's services in Ontario and the impact of various government cuts. In a draft committee report, it was noted that many witnesses pointed to the value of quality early childhood education in the promotion of children's development (Glenn, 1996). Those from the education sector recommended that the government complete its review of the importance of junior kindergarten, a program for which funding has since been reduced, and also consider alternate staffing arrangements to make the program more affordable in some school boards. It was also believed by some of those putting forward such recommendations that Early Childhood Educators could deliver junior
kindergarten programs for a lower salary. Understandably enough, this matter continues to be contentious.

Regardless of who put forward the recommendations, or who actually delivers the programs, in the past decade educators have pointed to the potential benefit for all children, but particularly those at risk of developmental delays. In *New Directions for Child Care* (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1987) released by then Liberal government, a new vision of child care vision was presented and reflected a more comprehensive system for children that moved from a welfare connotation to “public service.” Inherent in the new system were reasonable access, responsive services, and high quality child care.

Soon after the then Liberal government placed a special emphasis on early childhood education when it stated the following in a Throne Speech:

> The early childhood years are the most important years for acquiring basic learning and social skills. The quality of education that our children receive in these critical foundation years will largely determine their ability to succeed at school and in later years. (Government of Ontario, 1989, p. 7)

A later document, commissioned by the same Liberal government but delivered to the NDP government, *Children First* (Maloney, 1990), presented a more elaborate system and described the various components. This document envisioned the school as a hub with access to children's services, including child care, happening at the local school. Although the school may not deliver the service, the proximity to the education system was seen as a critical factor in terms of access for families.

In 1993, a Cabinet Submission made the following recommendations, which were directly linked to the education system:
1) MCSS and Ministry of Education (MoEd) be directed to fully develop the costings, policy, and implementation implications of establishing an Early Childhood Authority, responsible for the implementation of child care and early education reform, and return to Cabinet in three months. An integral part of the analysis will be the phased-in implementation of publicly funded full day early education programs for children ages three to five.

2) The Ministry of Education be directed to proceed immediately to review the Education Act, with the purpose of allowing school boards to hold the licence to operate regulated, non-profit child care services within their catchment areas, and that, following policy approval, appropriate amendments to the Education Act be tabled by spring 1993.

3) Cabinet direct MCSS, Ministry of Colleges and Universities (MCU) and MoEd to work in conjunction with stakeholders (such as the Advisory Committee on Franco-Ontarian Education) to address the following human resource issues:

   a) New standards and models for ECE and other staff training requirements
   b) Recruitment of designated groups under employment equity, and enhanced delivery of ECE programs - especially those which are francophone and aboriginal specific
   c) Connection between ECE and Teacher Training
      (Cabinet submission, 1993, p. 5)

In the follow up document submitted to Cabinet (Cabinet Office Report, 1994), the Ministers of Education and Community and Social Services were asked to detail a plan for an "Early Years Program." The document went on to speak to the co-ordination between child care and education stating that inter-ministry activities would support improved co-ordination through “Inter-ministry policy development and consultation, policy guidelines, and directives and, where necessary, legislation or regulatory amendments to facilitate the removal of barriers and to support enhanced co-ordination” (Cabinet Office Report, 1994, p. 3).

Little (1996) observed that while governments at all levels have traditionally viewed education and care as two separate areas, administered by two different government departments, "changes in society have increasingly resulted in the need to
view education and care as vitally related" (Little, 1996, p. 39). Most European nations have a system that integrates child care and education during the early years. Britain is one of a few yet to have an established early years program. North American governments, at a time when research findings on its benefits have never been more positive and explicit, have adopted policies that threaten to reduce the quality of care and the educational component.

The issue of quality in the child care debate is important for several reasons, the least of which is the benefit, to all children who have access to high quality child care. Several studies including three American studies (Howes & Olenick, 1986; Howes, 1990; Vandell & Corsaniti, 1990) have demonstrated the long-term impact of poor quality child care on development. Children in poor quality centres were less compliant than those in higher quality centres and these children had more difficulty with peers than children from high quality centres.

Some have tried to argue that a good home environment will compensate for a poor child care program. In 1990, Howes found that the quality of child care was more important than family characteristics in determining the infant’s future development. Research in the United States, England, and Bermuda has shown that organized activities and routines, as opposed to free play, are associated with higher scores on tests of cognitive and language skills (Carew, 1980; Clarke-Stewart & Gruber, 1984; Smith & Connolly, 1986). Nonetheless, Doherty (1991) notes that a good home environment is not able to compensate for poor child care.

Within the education sphere, many families have demonstrated their unwillingness to accept what they perceive as a poor quality education system by moving
their children into the private system. The notion that poor quality schools would be compensated for at home is an argument seldom used by parents or educators. In Ontario and some other provinces such as Alberta, governments have responded with reformed curriculum and increased use of standardized testing. Some believe that such measures will improve the quality of education. In comparison, increased use of unlicensed care by government suggests a lack of concern for our youngest children and their development.

Whether we call it child care, early childhood education, or pre-school is largely an issue of semantics. Research has shown that high quality early childhood education and care programs can have a potentially positive and lasting impact on the children and families involved. As an increasing number of researchers, educators, and other practitioners in the social policy field acknowledge the importance of the early years, politicians continue to struggle with the implementation of theory into practice.

**Assumptions in the Study**

This study will endeavour to describe some of the variables and dynamics of the impact they may have on the agenda-setting process of government. However, in light of the view that variables and the degree of impact change over time, the findings will not be conclusive and applicable to all time periods or government regimes. The intent of this research is not to provide a final list of variables, but to attempt to gain some understanding of those variables that have been influential between 1983 and 1996.

The first assumption is that the term "child care" is an imprecise and ambiguous term in most parts of the world, including Ontario. It is used to refer to services providing care for working parents in many situations while in others, the term may refer
to child protection work or other forms of social work intervention with children who are considered to be at risk. Recent coverage of infant deaths in the Ontario child welfare system resulted in a headline that referred to child care workers in a negative manner. Yet, the child care workers referred to were, in fact, Children’s Aid workers and not child care centre workers. To further compound confusion the terms “child care” and “early childhood education” are frequently used interchangeably within the profession. The Day Nurseries Act (1984) requires that approximately half the staff in a centre are qualified early childhood educators who have received either college diplomas in early childhood education or the equivalent. The professional organization to which they may belong is the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario. For the purpose of this study, the terms child care and early childhood education will be used interchangeably to refer to programs licensed through the Day Nurseries Act (1984) which are intended to offer a stimulating environment for children in a developmentally appropriate setting through trained staff (see Definitions below).

The second assumption deals with the term "quality." This term is frequently used without a clear definition of what exactly defines a high-quality child care centre. Doherty (1991) used the following definition of quality child care:

- supports and assists the child’s physical, emotional, social and intellectual well-being and development; and
- supports the family in its child-rearing role. (p. 1)

In 1994, Doherty elaborated on this and described quality child care programs as those that provide children the opportunity to interact with adults and other children; the opportunity to converse with adults and have adults read to them; and the chance for
children to play and explore in developmentally appropriate surroundings. She notes that such environments are most likely to be found in regulated child care settings provided by trained early childhood educators rather than in unregulated child care. For the purpose of this study, the terms “high quality” or “quality child care” will be used within this particular context (Doherty, 1994).

There is an assumption that social policy development does not occur within an isolated environment. The environment surrounding policy development at any given time will change. The environmental qualities surrounding agenda-setting and policy development in this research are likely to change over time and will depend on the policy area. For instance, this study found the media to be perceived as a variable that has had significant influence over political agendas. In five years, another variable may be seen as more influential.

A final point to be made involves the experience the researcher brings to the analysis of the data. Between 1991 and 1996 the researcher was employed as a Social Policy Analyst with the Ontario Liberal Caucus. In that capacity, she had the opportunity to observe government strategy as well as opposition strategy on the issue and the process involved in developing such strategies. This experience also provided access to people and documents unavailable to many others, or at the very least, more difficult to access. Although she is no longer employed at Liberal Research, there can be no question of the bias that may consequently exist on the part of the researcher. Such bias should be considered within the context of what was gained: a unique insight into the agenda-setting process of governments and political parties within Ontario’s legislative system.
Significance of the Study

It is my hope that this study will of significance in two ways: first, it will contribute to the academic study of the variables influencing political agendas and social policy issues; and second, it will contribute to the application of knowledge and theory to reality. The emphasis of this study, by the very nature and context within which it is occurring, will be on the more academic aspect of the agenda-setting process. The study's findings may be relevant within the current thrust of governments at all levels to reform social programs. Although a significant amount of research concerns the policy processes used by government (Simeon, 1976; Malen & Knapp, 1992; Hall, Land, Parker & Webb, 1975; Dyck, 1996), information about the agenda-setting process is less prevalent. However, researchers like Kingdon (1984) do refer to these processes in the context of the events that occur when government is attending to a particular issue.

The question is why do politicians and decision-makers pay attention to one thing rather than another at any given time, placing some things on the political agenda and ignoring others? The emergence of an issue on the political agenda is a significant event that warrants further study. As observed by Schattschneider (1960), public policy is not influenced only by the final decisions such as votes in legislatures, but also by some issues and proposals and not others being even given serious consideration. More recently, Dyck (1996) developed a model of policy-making that identifies variables such as election platforms, pressure groups, and mass media as factors that may initiate the policy process. I hope this study will contribute to the existing and emerging literature on political agenda-setting through a case study of child care in Ontario and the politics surrounding the issue.
From a more practical and applied perspective, this study is especially significant at this time due to anticipated reforms to Ontario’s child care system. In September 1996 Janet Ecker, then Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services, released a white paper on child care, Improving Child Care In Ontario, and is expected to announce consultations and significant policy changes during 1998. In January, 1997 the government announced that new schools would no longer be required to accommodate child care centres within their structures. This was seen as a momentous policy shift. Proponents of government supported child care fear the recommendations will lead to a reduction in current standards and to a more market-driven system. This will, in their view, lead to the demise of the current system, forcing more families to access unlicensed, unregulated child care, which research has found to be generally of a lesser quality (Doherty, 1991; Howes, 1988). Within the broader field of social services, the study may have implications in terms of where advocates and lobbyists place their efforts.
Chapter 2

Literature Review: Variables of the Conceptual Framework

A Review of Variables

To understand and determine the variables involved in the agenda-setting process, the researcher reviewed related literature. A number of common variables were consistently identified within a number of models but were also examined at length within their own domains. For instance, various members of the media and academics have extensively examined the role of the media on policy-making and agenda-setting of governments. Similarly, political scientists have studied in great detail how public opinion influences the decisions of politicians. In trying to assess which variables were most relevant, the researcher relied on the framework developed for this study based on her own experience, the research of other academics, and their analyses of the ways in which variables can influence politics. In addition, the researcher considered which variables also appeared in the models reviewed earlier. Based on these factors, history, media, economics, public opinion, research, and political ideology were seen as some of the most dominant variables.

History

The historical element was not as common in models reviewed as some of the other variables, but several academics have examined the influence of history on present-day events within the political environment and ultimately on the policy and agenda-setting process. Schon (1983) suggests that governments are constantly learning how to solve new public problems. In doing so, they must "learn to create the systems for doing
so and to discard the structure and mechanisms grown up around old problems" (Schon, 1983, p. 116). Models of organizational learning most frequently recognize history as an influential role within any decision-making structure, such as that proposed by Levitt and March (1988), suggesting that organizational learnings are centred on organizational routines based primarily on interpretations of past events. The historical element plays a critical role in the model proposed by Levitt et al. (1988) and is seen to influence future decisions. Similarly, Simon (1991) also notes that "what an individual learns in an organization is very much dependent on what is already known to (or believed by) other members of the organization" (1991, p. 125). If we apply this to the child care context, the Ontario government released the Day Care Policy Background Paper (1981) which provided an historical overview of child care in the province. This paper could be seen then as a key element in the consultation that followed. The role of history in the child care policy and the policy development process is evident there and ought not to be ignored.

Just as the dynamics within government are influential within the historical framework, so too are the dynamics impacting on government. Child care did not enter the political sphere until the early 1970s, at which time the NDP made reference to the issue in election material. The elements that have since kept child care on the political agenda have included changes in demographics (e.g., number of women working), the economic climate, a growing awareness of the importance of the early years in a child's development, and the increasing need for both parents to work outside of the home. At the same time there has been recognition in principle by some policy-makers that women and the opportunities they may have, should not be limited because our society places a
traditional care-giving role on the female. These historical events, among others, have influenced the prominence of child care on the political agenda.

**Media**

The mass media -- television, radio, and newspapers -- are main sources of information for many citizens. There was a time in history when individuals could gather information and formulate opinions from real, personal experience. But the rapid expansion of the electorate and the simultaneous shift in the sources of information and opinion to "second-hand or vicarious experience" at the turn of the century have changed this. At the turn of the century the mass circulation of newspapers was spreading across North America. In the 1920s, radio began to enter the homes of many North Americans to be followed by the television in the 1950s. More recently, the Internet provides yet another source of information about our society, our politicians, as well as other local, national, and international news. It is agreed upon by many theorists that the mass media has a significant impact on public opinion (Dyck, 1996; Taras, 1990; Anderson, 1984). Dyck (1996) suggests that mass media and public opinion polls are two of the most important elements in the political system. Theorists who claim that the ability of the media to raise the profile of any issue to the forefront can have a profound impact on political agendas see the influence of the mass media in the political system as quite significant.

Three different theories regarding the role of the media in this regard were examined (McMenemey, 1989). The first assumed that the media had a direct and significant impact on virtually every individual in the community in terms of providing
and interpreting information. However, as will be specified below, survey research has shown this theory to be faulty. The second theory emerged to replace the first and suggested that the media primarily influenced opinion leaders. Such leaders were thought to pay close attention to political development and often transmitted information and opinion to those in group situations. While there may be considerable truth to this theory, the prevailing theory asserts that the media tell people what issues to think about as opposed to the specific opinion they should have. Gormley (1975) further elaborates on this theory to suggest that the mass media set agendas for discussion. Maxwell, McCombs, and Shaw (1972) also maintain that in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters assume a significant role in shaping political reality. For instance, not only do readers learn about a particular issue at a particular time, they also extract how much importance to attach to an issue based on the amount of information in a news story and its position. Some elaboration on this point follows.

To begin, some researchers (Dyck, 1996) have tried to assess the influence of the media on the policy agendas of decision-makers. During the 1980s, a series of studies tried to determine if media coverage affected political agendas. The first study in the series (Cooke, 1983) looked at the impact of a nationally televised investigative news report on fraud and abuse in a US-funded home health care program. The researchers found that the news report had significant effects on the public's agenda and that of policy makers. Those exposed to the television investigative report were more concerned about the issue, hence influencing both agendas. The second study (Protess, Leff, Brooks, & Gordon, 1986) attempted to measure the agenda-setting effects of a Chicago Sun-Times newspaper investigative series on rape and government improprieties in the handling of
similar cases. The research found that while the effect on the agenda was more limited, it was largely attributed to an already high level of awareness and concern about crime among all groups. The third study (Leff, Protess, & Brooks, 1986) looked at the effects of a five-part television investigative series about repeatedly brutal Chicago police officers. The study did find the report to have a significant impact on the general public. The same was not seen in the response of policy-making elites. However, the series did lead to major policy changes within the Chicago Police Department, in contrast to the largely symbolic gestures that followed the home health care and rape reports.

In view of the mounting evidence about the impact of the media on policy, Schon (1983) probed the relationship between media and the policy process, concluding that in the policy and agenda-setting process media are central:

They are the vehicles of the vanguard roles, the technologies of diffusion. They have their own thresholds and place their own criteria on the formulation of ideas to be diffused. These requirements are not merely technical. There are journalistic requirements that events fit the prevailing myths of news. There are semantic requirements for 'catchiness'. The very ability to express an idea in a phrase - Medicare, the War on Poverty, Guaranteed Annual Wage - may be critical. Through such requirements, media transform the ideas themselves. (p. 135)

Others such as Beniger (1984), MacKuen (1984), and Marsh (1984) have also noted that the media's decision to portray an issue in either a positive or negative light and consequently giving or limiting public exposure, has a predictable impact on public opinion. In a study of one Royal Commission in education, Cody (1995) found that the media played a significant role. Cody noted that:

...the media acted as an intermediary between the work of the Commission and the public. It was a crucial link in educating the public about the broad policy issues that the Commission was addressing and it provided a platform for the various pressure groups to articulate their stances. The media provided not only
information but also the interpretative framework that shaped the debate. (p. 147)

The findings of research by individuals such as Leff, Protes and Brooks (1986), Gormley (1975) combined with the analysis of individuals such as Dyck (1996), Seib (1987), and Seigal (1983) does support the identification of media as a variable that influences the political process, and specifically, the political agenda. Seib (1987) notes that as the most constant provider of information to the public, the media do much to set the national agenda. Sieb (1987) suggests a model, Mutual Reliance, which suggests a mutual dependence existing between media and politicians. The politicians depend on the media to cover their issues and share information with the public and the media depend on the politicians to generate newsworthy material in which the public will be interested. Seigel (1983) expanded on this concept asserting that the power and influence of the mass media came from several sources:

1) the media as providers of information;

2) the media as the major conduit between the public and the government the media help set the public agenda for what is important for government;

3) the media as influencer of agenda-setting. The media have created this role through their control over what is covered and what is not covered;

4) the editorial offerings often reflect an ideological stance of the source; and

5) the media have a direct influence on motivating political actors by the very nature of their scene-setting task.

For verification of this point, one only need look to the way politicians will often cater to the media by making remarks before newspaper or newscast deadlines. As suggested by Seib (1987), it really is a two-way relationship with politicians and journalists trying to use each other for their own best interests. In an examination of the media’s influence on
Canadian politics, Taras (1990) presented the Systems Model of Agenda-Building, shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1
Taras’ Systems Model of Agenda-Building

Taras’ Systems Model, building as it does on Easton’s (1960) famous model of political life, illustrates the interactive and highly charged dynamics that can occur within the political environment. While Taras’ model does not expand on other variables or
dynamics that may influence the agenda-setting process, his depiction does at least
capture the impact of the media on that process.

As it happens, the child care issue has received attention from print media since
the early 1970s. As will be shown later in the study, the bias of the newspapers covering
the issue, in terms of support for or against government subsidy of child care, directed the
tone of the articles. Individual reporters and their interpretation of the issues have also
influenced the type of coverage rendered. Gormley (1995) also found that the mass
media play a critical role in informing various communities including parents, employers,
policy-makers, and others. Gormley (1995) goes on to note that, "Much media coverage
is reactive; it ebbs and flows with legislative initiatives, scandals, press conferences, and
public protests. Some news outlets...have demonstrated a more sustained interest in child
care issues" (p. 50). The response of some print media to the child care issue will be
further explored in the data section of this study.

Public Opinion

Those studying the nature and impact of public opinion polls have observed that
opinions about topical issues often affect the political behaviour of individuals, especially
in voting, and frequently influence the actions of government. Within Canadian politics,
Dyck (1996) notes that public opinion polls have assumed an immense importance.
Seldom do we hear about a political campaign that does not involve some form of
opinion polling. In today's political environment, polling is seen as an instrument used
by political parties to gauge and phase public opinion. The research question for some
theorists, and certainly a central component of this research study, is whether the choices
of policy-makers are shaped or determined by public opinion.

One theorist (Jansson, 1994; Brown, 1990) suggest that politicians, bureaucrats, and lobbyists work in an environment in which they realize that voters can end careers and can bring down specific administrations. Taras (1990) states:

...public opinion polls have become the score-card of politics and the life-blood of political survival. Instead of looking at the long-term effects of policies and believing that, as political leaders, they should lead rather than follow, politicians have become obsessed by the latest gusts of public opinion as measured by public opinion surveys. (p. 4)

One might also ask if public opinion polls hold little value to politicians, why are political parties prepared to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on such polls? Anderson (1984) suggests that while such polls may not affect the decisions politicians make on a day to day basis, they will affect the broader, general boundaries and direction of public policy as well as the political agenda. This notion was confirmed in an American study (Lane & Sears, 1964) which looked at the relationship between the roll call votes of a congressman and the opinions of his constituents on a variety of issues in areas such as social policy. The study found that there was much less correlation between legislative views than anticipated. One can also suggest that an election result is a form of polling, giving the elected government a clear direction for policy. In 1995 Ontarians elected a provincial government which promised to hold a referendum on any tax increases (Progressive Conservative Party, Ontario, 1995) just as the Quebec government has tried to use the referendum process to help resolve the unity/sovereignty issue in 1995. Politicians intended this as an act of respect for public opinion.
In Ontario, virtually every party, while in government, has conducted public opinion polling on the child care issue. Governments have used this polling to understand the public's attitudes towards the infusion of more money into the child care system. In the case of child care, it appears that the use of public polling has been quite extensive with different governments. While governments may or may not have responded to the majority opinion expressed, at the very least, polling has allowed them to prepare for the public response to a government position on the issue.

The last available public poll conducted by the NDP government on child care was in 1993 (Westmount Research Consultants Inc., 1983). The poll found that support and opposition for child care reform was equal at 33%. Support was strongest among females aged 18-34 years and lowest among males over 45 years. Despite the relative support indicated in the poll, the New Democratic government did not proceed with child care reform.

While the use of polls by political parties is particularly interesting, it should be understood that advocates in many domains including social policy use polling. In 1995 the Canadian Policy Research Network funded a national study that polled public opinion in several policy areas. Such groups often use the results of such polls to strategically develop a plan to influence various levels of government as well as the general public. An analysis of the findings by Peters (1995) is useful in setting a context for this study. For instance, overwhelmingly the public supported a quality education system. In every province, with Ontario as the only exception, citizens were willing to see taxes increase to support a quality education system. Ontarians and older Canadians were more likely to say they would rather cut spending. In addition, public support for free universal primary
and secondary education was affirmed. Perhaps the issue is how we define primary education, e.g., at what age does it begin or should it begin?

Political Ideology

In an analysis of public schools and politics, Manzer (1994) links educational policy to perceptions of basic human needs. Within this context, he proposes that the views of individuals in Canadian society have typically differed in many ways. Manzer states:

People differ in their understanding of what contribution education makes to the satisfaction of human needs, which educational problems should be met through the provision of public education as opposed to collective and individual provision, and balance is between collective and individual needs in setting educational aims and objectives. Hence, institutions of educational governance and designs of educational policies are subject to political contestation and require political determination. (1994 p. 12, 1994)

In view of this premise, Manzer (1994) describes two polar ideological views: (1) Liberalism; and (2) Communitarianism: Conservative and Radical. Liberalism approaches public policy with the view that individuals should have an equal opportunity to realize prosperity. The role of the state in this is limited to the creation of an environment that is fair even in areas of competitiveness. In contrast, communitarian ideologies are based on the premise that society and its communities are hierarchical. Individuals are not equal and legitimate authority governs them. At the left of this spectrum are those who see individuals as equals “governed by cooperation and consensus based on relationships of democratic participation” (Manzer, 1994, p. 15). He goes on to argue that educational politics and policies are based on an ongoing dialogue about political principles.
These principles form people’s perceptions about what the educational problems are and what the solutions should be. For example, today Ontarians and their government are entwined in a debate over education, the problems with the system, and solutions; Manzer (1994) suggests that such political domination and grudging compromise have always surrounded Canadian educational policies. This is evident in the way many approach education when writing about the subject. While all of us will agree with statements such as those made by Francis Whyte (1994), an educational analyst who wrote, “…education is an integral part of the social fabric of a nation,” the ideological translation of this appears to differ among the dominant political parties. More recently, Paula Dunning (1997), a former school board trustee from Ontario, began her book on the Canadian education system stating “The education of the young is essential to the health and stability of all societies.” Again, the three dominant political parties in Ontario are likely to agree with this statement, but the practical interpretation may differ significantly. If social policies such as those in education are influenced by values and beliefs which make up ideology, then those examining the agenda-setting process must view ideology as a significant variable influencing political agendas.

The issue of ideology was raised during key informant interviews. As will be shown in the analysis of data later in this thesis, political ideology was identified as the most influential variable in the agenda-setting process. In the case of child care, respondents also felt that political ideology had had a negative impact on the development of a quality child care system in Ontario that was accessible and affordable. All advocates identified political ideology as having a significant impact on the agendas of political parties and governments. Kerry McCuaig, Executive Director of the Ontario
Coalition for Better Child Care, described ideology as an "excuse" used by governments for not doing anything, and as such, significantly influenced the exclusion of child care as an issue on the political agenda. Among those interviewed 13 of 15 identified political ideology as a significant variable in the agenda-setting process. For instance, a former Conservative Minister of Community and Social Services (who wished to remain unnamed), stated, "...that the viewpoint that a party has on responsibility for one's children would be ideological." Charles Beer, a former Liberal Minister of Community and Social Services, stated in consideration of the current Conservative government, that "Right now I would say political ideology is a "heavier" variable...today I sense that the political ideology says no and that guides the decision."

In this vein, Smith (1956) observed that:

"Education considered as a social institution can be shown to be subject to change that is dictated by other than logical forces; by primitive social forces rather than forces shaped immediately by human reason. These forces commonly find expression as deeply held ideas which are unamenable to reason and are characterized in conscious expression by crude rationalizations so that curious paradoxes and logical contradiction in thought and practice occasion little surprise. (Smith, p. 27)"

While the examples cited have focused on education, when examining any social policy paradigm, one can consider the application of such concepts in a broader context. This study will attempt to apply such considerations about education, politics, and ideology to the child care arena. Interview data collected suggests that as in the case of education, the attention given to the child care issue is vulnerable to the political ideology of parties in Ontario. Elinor Caplan, a former Liberal Cabinet Minister stated, "...political ideology is extremely important because, that's, by the way, I think the reason for the gridlock. You had three such different political ideologies, and if you look at where progress was made,
there was only one time...when you get the ideology of the left and the right, it’s when you go at the balance in the middle that you actually had progress” (Caplan, 1996).

Others clearly pointed to the booming economy as a key factor in the progress made in this area during the Liberal era.

In my effort to transfer and interpret these ideas to child care policy, Manzer’s (1994) comments about human needs, public problems, and political thinking are worth noting. First, he suggests that human needs define public problems. The demand for child care is indeed linked to the need which evolved as an increasing number of women with children entered the labour force. The policies that respond to such needs are made within frameworks of political ideas that influence and form the perceptions about the problems and the possible solutions. The different solutions presented by ideologically different groups or individuals are based on perceptions, influenced by personal values and beliefs (ideology), and the understanding of how solutions will satisfy human needs.

Several definitions of ideology can be found, but for the purpose of this study, it has been defined as:

...a system of interdependent ideas (beliefs, traditions, principles, and myths) held by a social group or society, which reflects, rationalizes, and defends its particular social, moral, religious, political, and economic institutional interests and commitments. (Gil, 1992, p. 55)

Ideologies serve as logical and philosophical justifications for a group’s patterns of behaviour, as well as its attitudes, goals, and general life situation. Despite ideologies being modified in accordance with socio-cultural changes, the elements of an ideology tend to be accepted as truth or dogma, rather than as tentative philosophical or theoretical formulations. Central to this study is the question of whether ideology influences the
agenda government sets for child care. One analysis of this study (Doern and Phidd, 1992) identified four levels of purposeful activity and thought associated with public policy: ideologies, dominant ideas, paradigms, and objectives. This typology has been reflected in the proposed policy framework. The ideology component, within this researcher’s proposed framework and the typology, is of particular interest since, as acknowledged by Doern et al. (1992), it encompasses the broadest level of the typology. As an umbrella of belief and action, ideology can provide political and social identity that helps to integrate and co-ordinate a politician’s or a political party’s views and actions on a wide range of political issues. Within this role, it is not surprising that ideologies often evoke contentious debate about power and control in society.

Within Ontario, the three dominant political parties are rooted in ideologies: liberalism, conservatism, and socialism. Liberalism encompasses a belief in the central role of the individual in a free society. There is also a belief in scientific and technological progress and the need for government intervention within a free-market capitalist economy. In comparison, Conservatism encompasses a belief in the need to preserve valued and proven traditions and hence places the burden of proof on those who advocate change. Conservatism also suggests a minimum amount of government intervention – within Ontario the current Harris government is often seen to display a conservative approach that is referred to as “Harris Conservatism”. Finally, Socialism de-emphasizes the individual and places a collective view of society as a guiding belief. Socialism is more likely to desire and promote rapid change and view power as something that must be concentrated. While it must be emphasized that the brief description provided does not capture the rich character of each, or the variations that
exist within each party, it does begin to provide an understanding of how the agendas and solutions of political parties will vary due to their ideology and the emphasis of that ideology. Ideology has been identified as a variable that causes a political party to have a policy preference while in government.

This same variable can also explain why different parties advocate different policies and different issues (Dyck, 1996; Doern et al., 1992). There are three different perspectives within the literature of Canadian political science with respect to party ideology (Dyck, 1996). The first view is that there is no basic ideological difference between the Liberal and traditional Conservative parties. Either they are equally committed to the capitalist system or they both respond to public opinion polls in a pragmatic and opportunistic manner. The second perspective is that while no fundamental ideological differences exist between Liberals and Conservatives, they have each maintained historical policy differences. Finally, the third perspective is that genuine ideological differences do exist in Canada as Liberalism, Conservatism, and Socialism and can be found in the three traditional parties.

There appears to be no consensus regarding the impact of ideology on the agenda and policy decisions taken by political parties. However, some theorists do argue that ideology has had an impact. Within frameworks of agenda-setting and policy development, the work of Heclo (1974) and Sabatier (1988) is worth mentioning since these models both identified political ideology as a variable influencing the policy process. Not only do Heclo (1974) and Sabatier (1988) identify political ideology as a variable, they also acknowledge the interaction between political ideology and other variables as well as the "players."
A brief review of child care policy suggests it could easily be used as a case study of how political ideology has influenced the policy decisions taken by different governments. In Chapter 4 the ideological positions taken by each of the three dominant political parties in Ontario will be examined. This terse review suggests that the NDP government of Ontario, traditional supporters of the non-profit child care sector, introduced policies to enhance and expand this sector. However, much of what the NDP implemented was carried over from the previous Liberal government and the direction it had set for child care in Ontario. The strategies introduced by the NDP hastened the number of private operators – a curious move since the number of private operators was naturally diminishing due to policies already in place. Upon the election of the Conservative government in 1995, private operators were encouraged to continue operating and policies were changed to enhance their viability. While the NDP appear to support a publicly funded system that would parallel our education system, the Conservatives seem to favour a market-driven system delivered by the private sector.

In the case of NDP and Conservative governments in Ontario, child care has been a marker that seems to distinguish these two parties. In comparison, the distinction between the Liberals and the NDP is not as obvious in many areas of social policy. Both parties agree on the need to reform the existing child care system and recognize the need for a combination of government support and parent fees to pay for a new system. The NDP was, and continues to be, clearer about the specific architecture of such a system. However its record while in government left advocates feeling that the Party promised much more than was actually accomplished. The Liberal record suggests that this party viewed child care as a support to employment with benefits for children and society. The
Liberals also recognized the value of the professionals in the system and were effective in the implementation of higher wages for child care staff. On November 21, 1996, Lyn McLeod, then Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, introduced a Private Member's Bill calling for a self-regulating body for early childhood educators. This initiative was based on research by the Westmount group, which indicated public support for a self-regulating body. While the Bill did pass, it was referred to the Committee of the Whole suggesting that the government supported the Bill in principle but did not want to address the issue at the present time. Hall, Land, Parker, and Webb (1975) note that ideology "may serve as one of the marker flags by means of which the parties publicly distinguish their positions" (p. 506). Hall et al. (1975) also note that those issues that possess "ideological flavour" for a party are more likely to gain attention from a governing party.

**Advocacy Groups and Research**

Advocacy is not a new phenomenon. Groups have historically organized to advocate ideas, causes, and people. In their efforts, such groups have sought to inform and influence the political decision-making process. Methods and strategies may have changed over time, but the overall purpose -- to influence public policy -- has remained consistent. In more recent years, theoreticians, practitioners, and politicians have increasingly focused their attention and concern to the impact of such groups on modern government. There continues to be considerable controversy about whether interest groups make essential, positive contributions to the functioning of democratic politics or whether they act to undermine democratic principles. Some theorists such as Pross (1986) and Thorburn (1985) argue that interest groups are essential to democratic politics
and that the recent proliferation of groups has enhanced democracy. In the interviews for
the previously cited study by Kingdon (1984) various political elite observed that interest
groups were among the most discussed and significant actors. While many interest
groups may have started with limited resources and little in terms of reputation, over time
they have augmented their power by building reputations for the quality of technical
information they give to legislators. Their power may be further enhanced by their access
to certain constituencies.

Jansson (1994) argues that "...powerful interests possess such clout that they can
single-handedly shape the course of specific deliberations" (p. 72). Within various
domains of social policy ranging from education to welfare, and child care, interest
groups that seek to influence government policy without contesting elections "have had
an impact on the policies considered and adopted by governments at all levels" (Dyck,
1996). Through an examination of conflicts and competition among interest groups in
the political arena, Gil (1992) further expands the concept of interest group participation
and impact on political agendas and policies. Gil (1992) poses that the social policy
realm is undergoing perpetual change because of the endless pressures and counter-
pressures among various interest groups.

Pross (1982) postulates two prime reasons why advocacy groups are formed. The
first is out of anger. Such anger was often rooted in people's resentment towards the
incessant intervention of government in their daily lives. Other factions, however, have
formed to place demands on government. In the case of child care in Ontario, those
advocacy groups in favour of government intervention in the system have been concerned
with the quality of care, accessibility, affordability, the way public resources are
allocated, and the direction of the regulatory function of government. Furthermore, Pross (1982) reasons that while parties have declined in policy influence, pressure groups have become more prominent. Dyck (1996) expands on this and considers why some groups are more successful than others. His conclusion is that there are a number of factors that influence a group's success. Group size is perhaps the most important factor considering that membership numbers represent votes. Secondly, money is an important resource. This resource influences the staff, offices, organization, expertise, and publicity that a group can purchase. Information is another critical resource in pressure group politics. In some instances, groups are able to present data and alternative analysis of policy that will lead Ministers to rethink proposals. The quality of group leadership, the tenor of the group's message, and the government's own financial position will all influence the successful efforts of a pressure group. During an interview Frances Lankin (1997), a former NDP Cabinet Minister and currently NDP critic for children's issues, noted that, "both the economy and government's fiscal situation" had an impact on agendas. She elaborated on the point stating, "...both are incredibly important in terms of the ability to proceed and/or the willingness to proceed." Similarly, in an interview, Charles Beer noted that his fellow Liberal John Sweeney’s achievements on the child care issue were influenced by the economy of Ontario and the internal economy of the government.

Good economic times enabled the Liberal government to implement a number of reforms. But what would have happened if the economy had been less prosperous? Mr. Beer stated,

...let's say he (John Sweeney) was there three years ago when the deficit was really bad it would have been a lot harder. He might have still been able to do
something but the timing in the mid-80s was such that there was an opportunity and he was able to take it and move it through.

Such comments, especially from those individuals who once sat at the Cabinet table, suggest a strong influence of the economic variable at two distinct levels; 1) the economy of the state; and 2) the economy of the government. These remarks imply an understanding of the need to reform child care by both the Liberal and NDP. However, while both Parties support a more accessible and affordable system, both point to economics as the force that each from fully implementing such a system. This was an interesting point since the Charles Beer, former Minister of Community and Social Services admitted that much of the progress made in the child care field was due to the prosperity experienced during the 1980s.

Child care advocates have been active at every level of government for the past two decades. Nationally, the Child Care Advocacy Association has lobbied governments on the issue of universal child care. The Association has advocated for a more accessible and affordable system of care that also meets the educational needs of children. Similarly, at the provincial level, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care has consistently lobbied government, at all levels, for universal child care. Less prominent, largely due to a smaller membership base (and the fact that it is not an advocacy group, rather, it is dedicated to professional development), is the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario who have also advocated for a high quality accessible child care system. At the local level, branches of many provincial advocacy groups have worked to ensure that local community needs for child care have been addressed. Until recently, child care was a cost-shared service among all three levels of government, and advocates
have recognized the necessity to work at all levels. Currently federal support is targeted to specific programs or groups and does not focus on the issue of regulated child care. While several advocates in support of a more universal child care system can be identified, only one prominent group has consistently spoken against such a policy -- The Association of Day Care Operators (ADCO). This group of for-profit centre operators believes in a market-driven approach to the delivery of child care services having lobbied all levels of government to move in that direction.

Within the legislative system, one respondent noted that it was the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care that led the movement of advocacy from the steps of Queen's Park to the inside of the legislature. This began with the "lobby days" traditionally held by the Coalition. Each party was given an opportunity to hear a presentation from the Coalition, respond, and answer questions about its position on child care. Some observers have suggested that moving lobbying efforts to inside the parliament has changed the way advocates lobby in Ontario.

**Economics**

The final dominant variable to be examined in this study is economics. There are three aspects of this variable that this research will examine. They are:

1) the impact of cost on the participation of women in the labour force;

2) the impact of cost on the type of child care chosen; and

3) the impact of economics on government policy.

Public policy is frequently viewed as a product of conflict between different groups of people, private and official, who have different desires. Anderson (1984) notes that one
of the prime sources of the conflict is economic activity. Anderson (1984) goes on to differentiate:

...it is the weaker or disadvantaged party (at least in a comparative sense) in a private conflict that seeks government involvement in the matter. The dominant group, the one that is able to achieve its goals satisfactorily by private action, has no incentive to bring government into the fray and usually will oppose government action as unnecessary or improper. (p. 26)

Evidence to date suggests that this is the case in the child care debate, with working women being the disadvantaged group. The availability of child care has influenced workforce participation by women. By way of discerning the working woman's sensitivity to child care costs, an American study by Blau and Robins (1988) established that if child care were free, the average mother would have an 87% probability of working. Furthermore, in a second study, Blau and Robins (1989) looked at the effects of child care costs on fertility as well as on employment, learning that:

...a $1.00 increase in weekly child care costs would cause the rate of leaving employment to rise by 2%. In contrast, an increase of $1.00 in child care credit on income tax would reduce the rate of leaving employment by 0.4%. (1989, p. 13)

Blau and Robins (1989) concluded that a $1.00 increase in child costs would reduce the rate of entry to employment by about 3%.

The second aspect of the economic variable is the influence of cost on the type of child care chosen. An American study by Hofferth and Wissoker (1990) and a Canadian study by Cleveland and Hyatt (1993) found the price of care had a large effect on child care choice and indeed, the effect was statistically significant in most cases. Other researchers such as Robins and Spiegleman (1978) and Yaeger (1978), concluded that the price of child care significantly influenced the type of care chosen.
The third and final consideration of the economic aspect is the influence of this variable on the decisions a government makes. Some may ask why government should involve itself at all in the child care issue; after all, is it not a private problem for families to resolve? Researchers (Doherty, 1991; Gormley, 1995; Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998) have shown that there is an economic gain from which everyone benefits when children have access to high quality child care. A recent Canadian study (Cleveland et al., 1998) found that the savings are closer to $2.00 -- still a significant amount. According to Gormley, "when individual children benefit from high-quality child care, other members of society may benefit as well. Under such circumstances, government has a responsibility to act" (1995, p. 4). Considerable research justifies why governments should act, but the question, and the central issue to this study is, why haven't they? Perhaps it is as Gil (1992) postulates:

Economic policies are, however, frequently separated conceptually from social policies. Such a separation leads to a view of economic activities as disassociated from human needs, social values, and social purpose. Moreover, the separation inhibits development of effective social policies, since it leaves policy planners without important operational variables to influence the circumstances and quality of life, relative social power, and social relations. Finally, the separation reduces social policies conceptually to a residual function focused mainly on victims of economic policies. (p. 39)

This may explain why child care in Ontario and much of this nation, has been seen as a welfare program within the social policy framework rather than as a program that not only promotes healthy child development, but acts as an economic support to working women while also benefiting society.
Within the proposed model, feasibility, legitimacy, and support are viewed not only as the general criteria used to assess an issue, but also the factors that influence the next steps taken in the policy process. Hall et al. (1975) theorize that “issues with high levels of legitimacy, feasibility and support will usually do best and vice versa” (p. 475). I would like to briefly consider each of these elements.

In determining the legitimacy of an issue, the question to be asked is whether or not the issue is one with which the government feels it should be concerned (Hall et al. 1975). How any government answers this question will influence the next step in the policy process. Hall et al. (1975) acknowledge that ideology, perceived “public opinion,” and interest groups will influence the legitimacy of an issue. For instance, in the case of child care, some governments may argue that child care is a private matter in which the government should not be involved – a debate which continues in Canada. Other nations and governments view it as an essential public service. In the case of some issues, legitimacy is predetermined by the traditional involvement of government, while other issues are barely even acknowledged.

The feasibility of an issue is affected by a review of theoretical and technical knowledge (Hall et al., 1975). However, as Hall et al. (1975) acknowledge, feasibility is connected to a number of factors:

Particular ideologies, interests, prejudices and information will affect the kinds of conclusions which are drawn about the feasibility of different alternatives. In particular, actors in the policy-making process are likely to assess feasibility differently to the extent that they are aware of and are influenced by different sets of constraints. Thus there may well be several competing views about feasibility; and the progress of a proposal can be affected by how this competition is resolved. (p. 479)
When considering the issue of feasibility, the feasibility of an issue is rarely apparent initially. In fact, many campaign platforms run on policies which are later determined to not be feasible by the civil service. Hall et al. (1975) argue that this element of feasibility is a key phase in the progress of an issue. Concern about resources, collaboration, and administrative capacities are identified by Hall et al. (1975) as the three calculations made in determining feasibility.

The final influence toward political action is that of support. A government initiative can be seen as legitimate and feasible but without support. Any government pursuit of such initiatives will likely have serious consequences in future elections. Any government wanting to fulfil a second term will implement those initiatives which will attract extensive public approval and improve the general support for the government (Hall et al., 1975). Governments will often use opinion polls or referenda to assess support, but the ultimate test is an election. While public support is a critical element, governments will also look at particular sets of interests and interest groups involved in policy proposals or changes (Hall et al. 1975). The value government places on the views of a particular group will vary and will be influenced by political alliances. For instance, currently at Queen's Park, some people feel that the Conservative government views labour as an adversary. The government sees demonstration groups and its unwillingness to compromise as actions which show that it is standing up to labour. The business community, traditional allies of this particular party, applauds the government for its stance. In the case of child care, this study will examine the various stages of public support for additional governmental involvement in child care as well as the support from various groups in regard to governmental initiative.
Leadership

Within the model proposed, leadership is not one of the Dominant Variables, but rather a component that is either influenced by the Dominant Variables or an influential force on the Dominant Variables depending on the dynamics of the time. In today's rapidly changing economy and society, the issue of leadership has been studied by educators, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and theologists among others. There are literally thousands of definitions of leadership (Rost, 1991). Hockin (1977) concluded, and this researcher would have to agree, “that the operational meaning of the definition would change depending on the context in which leadership would be exercised” (p. ix). Further to this, Elgie (1995) states:

...there are many different types and forms of political leadership as well as many different arenas in which political leadership must be exercised. Types and forms of political partnership correspond to the manner in which leaders exercise leadership. They include charismatic leadership, heroic leadership, revolutionary leadership, innovative leadership, transforming leadership, transactional leadership, personal leadership, individual leadership, collective leadership, consensual leadership, reactive leadership and managerial leadership. (p. 4)

Elgie (1995) also identified several arenas in which leadership may be exercised. The policy arena, the political party arena, the Cabinet arena, the legislative arena, and the bureaucratic arena are among the many possibilities. Elgie proposes a simple model of political leadership, as seen in Figure 2-2, which illustrates the impact of leadership on the political leaders, but does not reflect the other variables that influence leaders and the decisions they may make.
Observations such as these suggest that a single definition of leadership is not plausible. In a review of literature on leadership in education, Taylor (1994) concluded, “It is apparent in the literature that no one definition, list of descriptors, or theoretical model provides a complete picture of either the theory or practice of leadership in education” (p. 9). The circumstances and the situation in which an issue is raised will influence the form of leadership provided and hence the definition. This study will examine at the leadership provided on the issue of child care. Using the interviews, the researcher hopes to ascertain the nature of the interaction between the variables, the leader, and the outcome. As so aptly noted by Kellerman (1984), the heart of the debate is control, “who controls the outcome of public policy decisions within a state and how they do so” (p. 71). The researcher anticipates that the interaction of variables will differ for each party and perhaps for each individual. Within the broader context of this study, this consideration will help define how these leaders have shaped the policy process and
whether it was likely shaped by them or by forces above and beyond their control.

Anderson (1984) also identifies political leadership as an important factor in agenda-setting. Political leaders may seize upon particular problems, publicize them, and propose solutions because they are motivated by considerations of political advantage, concern for the public interest, or both. In a U.S. study of agenda-setting, Walker (1977) concluded that some legislators see themselves as activists and are motivated by a desire to promote social change. These individuals are anxious to gain reputations as reformers who are constantly in search of issues that might be transformed into new items on the political agenda.

When considering leadership, one is, upon examining the literature, encouraged to consider not only political leadership, but also the leadership of pressure groups. Jansson (1994) identifies this as an equally influential factor. Skilled leaders understand groups' developmental, structural, and process needs and engage their group members accordingly. Similarly, as noted earlier when examining pressure groups, Dyck (1996) also identified group leadership as one of the most influential factors when looking at the impact of pressure groups on agendas and policies. Jansson (1994) also suggests that the leadership that pre-exists a policy will influence the success or failure. The leadership's commitment, priorities, authority, time, and resources are all factors that will affect the agenda-setting process and the policy. These elements are not restricted to group or political leadership but apply to both.
Chapter 3
Child Care: A Literature Review

The Rationale for a More Comprehensive and Educational Child Care System

In Ontario, provincial governments have primarily viewed child care as a support to employment for women. While this may be a necessary and legitimate role for child care services to assume, it is not the only role assigned to it in other jurisdictions. The choice of governments around the world to view child care as more than a support to employment stems for an increasing body of knowledge about the impact of quality child care on child development (Ruopp, Richard, Travers, Glantz, & Coelen, 1979; Zigler & Gordon, 1982; Phillips, 1987; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990; Hayes, Palmer, & Zaslow, 1990; & Doherty, 1991) as well as the more recent exploration of brain development during the first three years of life. What is unique about this more recent literature is the dissemination of the information, which is occurring through populist vehicles such as Time Magazine (1997) which did a cover story on the research. According to the lead article, the first three years are critical. Consequently, so too are the experiences that children have during those first three years. The magazine notes that “the new insights have begun to infuse new passion into the political debate over early education and day care” (1997, p. 49). Experts, not only from the child care field, but psychiatrists, scientists, and others, are advocating for preschool programs designed to boost the cognitive functioning of young children, especially those born into impoverished rural and inner-city households.

There are compelling reasons for investing in quality child care services by governments. Such services, if made more affordable, and accessible, could provide an
educational and economic benefit for the child and society. But despite these arguments, licensed child care in Ontario remains out of reach for many Ontario families due to prohibitive costs and poor accessibility. This chapter will explore the various arguments made in favour of a more affordable child care system that is of a higher quality.

**Economic Backdrop**

From an economic perspective, four broad areas should be considered when examining the child care issue. The first deals with demographic changes such as the number of women needing child care in the workforce. The second deals with the impact of child care costs on the choice of child care arrangements. The third area is the impact of child care costs on the participation rate of women in the labour force. The fourth aspect addresses the economic impact of child care provisions on the individual and society. This section will review related research in each of these areas. The debate on the issue of child care continues to be fuelled by the increase in demand due the rising number of women participating in the labour force since 1951 (Statistics Canada, 1988).

**Demographic Changes**

An historical review suggests that since the inception of government funded child care in the late 1800s, such programs in Ontario were initially established as a charitable service for the children of domestic workers. The disposition of governments to view child care in this context can be traced back to the establishment in the 1890s of the first child care centre in Ontario, which was established to provide care for the children of single working mothers (Lero & Kyle, 1990). During World War II, an unprecedented
number of women began working outside the home. Over time this trend continued. A comparison of female participation in the labour force shows that rates in 1946 were 20.2% compared to 57.5% in 1993 (Cleveland, 1997). In 1991 the Canadian National Child Care Study found that in over 64% of two-parent families, both parents were employed while in 34.1% of the two-parent families, one parent was employed. In one-parent families, 60% of the parents were employed with 39.8% not employed. The study also found that in two-parent families and one-parent families, the likelihood of employment increased in families in which there were no children of 0-5 years of age. To further illustrate this trend towards increased participation in the labour force, Cleveland (1998) compared specific categories of mothers and their participation in the labour force. He suggested that growth in participation rates had been particularly strong amongst married women with children including those with preschool children. Cleveland states that in 1975, 31.2% of all mothers with their youngest child under three years of age were in the labour force compared to 60.1% in 1990; 40% of mothers with their youngest child three to five years of age were in the labour force in 1975 compared to 66.2% in 1990; and 48.2% of mothers with their youngest child 6-15 years of age were in the labour force in 1975, as compared to 76.4% in 1990. Also recently, Lero (1996) notes that 57% of children age five years or younger living in two-parent families in 1994-95 were living in situations where both parents worked and/or studied. Furthermore, in 1994, 57% of women in Canada whose youngest child was under age three, and 59% whose youngest child was between three and five years, were engaged in paid work (Statistics Canada, 1995).
When looking at demographics, a second trend is also evident: that of family composition. In particular, among families with children, the number of single mothers has grown significantly. Powell (1997) notes that the labour force participation rate for single mothers with preschool children in 1995 was 47%. Cleveland (1998) suggests that a number of young mothers will lose their partners and may be left to support their children independently due to inadequate child support. Most of these women will likely end up on welfare unless they are in high-income careers. A study by Veum and Gleason (1991) found that in the United States between 1970 and 1988, families headed by women increased from 10.6% to 16.3% of all families. This was attributed to the increase in the number of divorced women who had not re-married and the frequency of births to unwed mothers.

As a natural consequence of increased labour market participation by women, a paralleled increased in demand for child care services occurred. In addition, there has been a significant change over the last few decades in the types of work undertaken by women. Powell (1997) identified an increased prevalence of non-standard work including part-time work, non-day and shift work, multiple-job holding, and self-employment among female workers in Canada. Within the child care policy debate, this is an important trend since the availability of services, including government funded services, may not allow mothers working non-standard hours to use certain, perhaps more preferable, arrangements. Powell (1997) also notes that the use of centre care is most prevalent among traditional day-shift workers compared to other work categories. Furthermore, the use of centre-based care among both married and single mothers declines significantly in part-time, non-day shift, and multiple-jobs situations. For many
families, the type of work not only influences the type of care arrangement chosen, but also the number of non-parental care services used by a family. For some families, centre care may need to be supplemented by a sitter or extended-family mode of care due to non-standard work hours.

Factors Affecting Choice of Care

During the past decade, researchers have begun to examine factors influencing the choices families make regarding child care arrangements. A review of literature suggests that while there is no consensus as to which are the most influential variables, several appear to be cited more consistently than others are. Payette and Vaillancourt (1984) concluded that the child’s age, the mother’s education, work situation, and family income are the most significant factors affecting the choice of care. In analyses of their own, Yeager (1979) and Blau and Robins (1988), analysed, and concluded that the price of care also influences the type of care chosen. Similarly, Hofferth and Wissoker (1990), found that price was very important in determining the type of care arrangements chosen by families. In all instances, the higher the price, the less likely parents were to choose an option. It should be noted that this variable was stronger when the option being considered was centre care.

Another variable common to all the studies cited is income. According to Hofferth et al. (1990), in two-parent families, the higher the husband’s earnings the greater the expenditure on licensed centre based care as opposed to informal and unregulated care. However, the same did not apply to sitter care or care by a relative. The same study found that higher earnings by the wife do not significantly raise child
care expenditures (Hofferth & Wissoker, 1990). Further to this, in a study of Metropolitan Toronto families, Cleveland (1990) identified four categories of variables to be significant in child care choice: attribute variables such as price and convenience, variables describing the ages and number of children in the family, mother's work variables, and a list of socio-economic variables. Contrary to other studies, Cleveland (1990) did not identify family income and the number of parents in the family as influencing the choice of centre rather than neighbourhood sitter or care by a relative.

Additional studies (Robins & Spiegelman, 1978; Yeager, 1978; Lehrer 1983, 1989; Liebowitz, Waite, & Witsberger, 1988; Hofferth & Wissoker, 1992) have also detected some consensus on several findings. For instance, higher prices decrease the probability of using any type of care. Secondly, the convenience and quality of centre care are likely to have a positive effect on the choice of that type of care. Third, the younger the children, particularly in the case of infants or very young children, the less the use of centre care and the greater the use of care by a relative or informal provider. Finally, the mother's hours of work, her income, and education more frequently have a positive effect on the odds of choosing centre care rather than care by a relative. The Cleveland and Hyatt study (1993) resulted in similar findings within the Canadian context. These researchers specifically looked at Ontario and Quebec and did "verify the basic consensus of results from American studies" (Cleveland and Hyatt, 1993, p. 64).

**Child Care as a Factor Affecting the Labour Force Participation Rate of Women**

Although this chapter has primarily addressed the issue of factors affecting choice of care, it is also necessary to consider the economic impact of the cost of care on the
participation of women in the labour force. Cleveland, Gunderson and Hyatt (1996) and Powell (1997) recently reviewed the literature on this subject from a Canadian perspective. Both concluded that similar to American studies, it appears that child care costs exert a significant negative effect on the labour supply of women with children. Cleveland (1997) notes that a 10% increase in the expected price of child care is associated with a 3.9% reduction in the mother's probability of engaging in paid employment. With Canadian evidence at hand, Powell (1997) concluded that full-time work is quite sensitive to child care costs, while part-time work is less so. Specifically, she found that if all child care costs were fully subsidized, the rate of full-time employment (as a percentage of all mothers) would increase from 20% to 52%. This clearly suggests that cost does, in fact, have a strong positive effect on full-time work. The work of Heckman (1974), Averett, Peters, and Waldman (1992), and Gustafsson and Stafford (1992) provide further evidence, indicating that costs have a substantial negative effect on hours worked.

The literature noted above primarily considers the choices of married women. There is a separate body of literature relating to the impact of cost of care on labour force participation of single women. There appears to be a consensus in the literature that the effect of child care cost on labour force participation is quite strong (Cleveland, 1997). In fact, Cleveland suggests that "the decisions of lone mothers are likely to be more sensitive to changes in child care policy than are the decisions of married mothers" (Cleveland, 1997, p. 27). Cleveland and Hyatt (1993), using data from the Canadian National Child Care Survey, say that a 10% rise in child care costs lowered the employment rate of single mothers by approximately 6%. Furthermore, when looking at
the American scene Connelly (1991) also found that the use of social assistance would fall from 20% to about 11% if child care costs were fully subsidized. These findings were supported by the results of the Canadian National Child Care Survey (1991) which asked employed single mothers paying for child care whether they would change their arrangements or leave their employment situation if the price of child care were to rise by 25% or more. Close to 70% of single mothers stated they would change child care arrangements in such an event and nearly 40% said they would quit their jobs.

**The Economic Impact of Quality Child Care on the Individual and Society**

Arguments can be found for and against quality child care that is affordable and accessible to all families. Regardless of which side of the argument one may prefer, a growing body of research supports the notion that quality child care, when made available to all families, is beneficial at a number of levels. First, the child is the most immediate beneficiary. Reviews of the research have shown that benefits can be found in all aspects of development from cognitive to social-emotional for children in all income categories (Osborn and Millbank, 1987; Lamb, 1998; Doherty, 1996). Second, the family will benefit from the knowledge that their child is not only well cared for, but may also benefit from the indirect, or sometimes direct, parent education that frequently occurs in quality programs. The family may also benefit from such programs which make them able to join the workforce. This also benefits society, as more and more people are able to join the workforce and fewer are reliant on the state for assistance. Finally, society benefits as children who may have been at risk of developmental delays, abuse, or neglect are identified early on and the problems appropriately addressed. This section will
examine the benefits of quality child care from these three perspectives. Figure 3-1 illustrates Doherty’s (1997) model of the cyclical nature of the economic impact of a strong social safety net for children and the impact such resources have on the child and on society.

Figure 3-1
Doherty's Model of the Virtuous Circle: The Interrelationship Between Economic and Social Goals

While many within society, from a number of domains, will acknowledge the relationships illustrated by Doherty (1997), the researcher suggests that public policy has not been able to successfully translate the understanding of the cycle to actual programs and services.
The Child as Beneficiary

For decades researchers have been examining the impact of quality child care on child development. Researchers have found that children in high quality child care programs spent more time in positive peer interaction and engaged in higher developmental levels of play than those in poor quality programs (Vandell, Henderson & Wilson, 1988; Howes, 1990). Furthermore, research is beginning to suggest that problems of child care availability contribute to depression among employed mothers with young children while child care quality problems contribute to ill health among mothers who work in the paid labour force (Mason & Kuhlthau, 1992). The impact of high quality child care can also be appreciated by considering the implications of poor quality child care. Several studies have found that child care which only addresses the child’s safety and physical needs is associated with delays in social and language skill development (Baker, 1991; Doherty, 1994). Howes (1990) also reported that children placed in low quality infant care had the greatest difficulty with peers as preschoolers, were more distractible, less task-oriented, and more hostile.

A review of literature shows that when quality is factored in, children attending high quality centres were more confident in their social interactions, more co-operative, less anti-sociable, less dependent and engaging in less negative play than children in low quality centres (McCartney, Scarr, Phillips, Grajek, & Schwarz, 1982; Howes & Olenick, 1986; White, Jacobs, & Schliecker, 1988; Howe & Jacob, 1991). An examination of research on cognitive development suggests that high quality child care experiences
enhance a child’s intellectual or school-related skills. Weikart (1984) reported that when placed in high quality programs, children with low socio-economic status were less likely to repeat school grades, or to be placed in special education classes and more likely to complete high school and pursue vocational or academic training compared to children without early childhood education experiences. In studies of Swedish high quality child care, by Anderson (1989, 1992), it was found that children who had entered child care at an early age (before age one) performed significantly better on cognitive tests and received more favourable ratings from teachers when compared to those who began child care later and those who remained at home. Therefore, from a cognitive perspective, the research overwhelmingly demonstrates the potential positive impact of high quality child care on a child’s cognitive development. Not least, in the area of language development, reviews of research have shown how critical the first few years of life are for developing the foundation for the social language and thinking skills the child will need later in life (Doherty, 1994; Keating & Mustard, 1993). Several studies have found positive correlation between attending high quality child care and children’s language performance (Kontos & Fiene, 1987; Phillips, Scarr, & MacCartney, 1987; Schlieker, White & Jacobs, 1991). A preliminary review of research by Howe et al. (1991) concludes that high quality centre care may promote a child’s language development. With some areas of development, social emotional, cognitive and language, it appears that high quality child care can positively influence a child’s development.

In the case of children who may be at risk of developmental delays, high quality child care has been shown to have an even greater impact. The most well-documented example is The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project in the United States. The program
was aimed at stimulating the cognitive development of three to five year old children from families identified as high risk of school failure due to their socio-economic situation and low intellectual performance. The program had two components. The first was a 2.5 hour session for the children every weekday morning. The second was a 1.5 hour visit to each mother and child on weekday afternoons. The findings revealed that those in the program obtained higher IQ scores at age nine; the children were less likely to be placed in a special education program; they performed better on reading, arithmetic, and language tests by age 14; and they had a higher regular high school graduation rate. From 17 to 27 years of age among those involved in the program, fewer had received social services, and by age 27 fewer had been arrested. In their review of literature Trembley and Japel (1997) suggest that in the case of children at risk, the benefit to the child’s development was significant in the project.

**Society as the Beneficiary**

Some economists and advocates argue that the provision of quality, affordable child care benefits society in a number of ways. First, tracing the roots of child care, historians have carefully documented evidence affirming that the main purpose of the earliest child care centres in Ontario was to enable women, particularly single mothers or the working poor, to enter employment. Enabling women to work benefited society as these women were then not reliant on the state for support and further contributed to the economic cycle of any society. In addition, early reformers argued that inadequate care would result in delinquency, criminals, mental diseases, and poverty – each of which was a sad state for the individual affected, but also for society, which must bear the burden of
such unwanted situations (Prentice, 1988). J.J.Kelso, a prominent social commentator in the late 1800s, observed that 75% of all criminals were the product of inadequate childhood care. He suggested education as the solution and further argued that while kindergarten and school were to be the most important agents of social control, day care also had a role. He stated that "A child’s education begins from its earliest infancy, and the State has a right to insist that its training shall be such as to fit it ultimately for the proper discharge of its duties and responsibilities." (Schulz, reference to be traced).

As mentioned earlier, the cost benefit to society has been estimated by Cleveland and Krashinsky (1998) as $2.00 for every dollar spent now on children. So the benefit to society is two-fold. The first is an obvious cost savings in terms of potential health, social welfare, and justice costs. The second benefit is the economic contribution of those employed, rather than being dependent on the state. Such individuals are contributing to the economic growth of the nation, and this benefits not only the individual, but also society clearly making it in the public’s interest.

While some may argue that children are a private responsibility, their well-being has a significant impact on the family, the community, and the society in which they live. The evidence suggests that access to affordable high quality child care can better the circumstances of the individual, family, and community (Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998). Research regarding such benefits is beginning to penetrate policy makers as some economists begin to participate in the child care debate and support the availability of affordable, accessible, high quality child care.
Chapter 4
A Conceptual Framework

Existing Models of Policy Development

Exploration of the agenda-setting process has evolved from an understanding of policy development models. The literature reviews provided some insight about the variables to consider and the dynamics. To guide the researcher to the creation of a conceptual framework, a number of policy development models were also considered.

Below a treatment is offered of selected prototypes of policy models followed by a sorting out of elements which will be drawn upon for this study. Many models are based on the work of Thomas Dye (1965) who began to examine the relationship between the socio-economic environment, the political system, and public policy. While there are several common elements among these models, researchers have noted that the findings and interpretations are often disparate and contradictory (Munns, 1975). As a basis for identifying a conceptual framework appropriate for this study, variations are presented of the “mainstream” models, which incorporate a causal link between environment and policy.

In short, the mainstream model and its variations are seen as a one-way conveyor belt moving from a box labelled “the environment” through the “political system” to “public policy.” Practitioners of the mainstream model use correlation and regression analysis to test whether environmental or political variables have a more profound impact on public policy. Among researchers who use mainstream models are those who posit a direct link between environmental determinants and public policy as outputs with negligible independent impact from political system characteristics. This is referred to as
the environmental formulation shown in Figure 4-1. Characteristics of the political system intervene and change the basic relationship between environment and public policy.

**Figure 4-1**
Environmental Formulation
The "environmental formulation" variation of the politics intervening formula model places socio-economic characteristics as the environment that determines both political system characteristics and public policy outputs.

Within this framework, Dye (1966) identified economic development as the key independent variable. The policy outputs, according to Dye (1966), are taxation and "policies" for education, welfare, highways, and regulation of public morality. This formulation finds that socio-economic variables are most important in explaining public policy (Munns, 1975). Munns (1975) notes that, in fact, other environmental formulation theorists have found similar results at the local level: socio-economic variables (the environment) are of prime importance in accounting for community taxing-spending policies. The final assumption or conclusion of this formulation is that political systems, regardless of their varying characteristics, behave similarly in responding to environmental stimuli and differences are attributed to differences in the actual environment.

In comparison, the second variant of the mainstream model, the politics-intervening formulation shown in Figure 4-2 (Munns, 1975, p. 648), uses the same input-output mode. But, this second formulation identifies aspects of the political systems as intervening factors that change the relationship between the environment and policy.
Although the variables used are similar to those in the environmental formulation, the politics-intervening formulation finds that some political system characteristics behave differently in responding to the environmental stimuli; consequently some differences exist in outputs, even in similar environments.

While the impact of the mainstream model appears to be significant, there is also considerable criticism regarding the inadequacies of the model. First is the neglect of process. The model, as shown in Figure 4-3, illustrates a one-way conveyor belt, and presents an assumption of simple causation without any clear understanding of exactly how the environmental element moves along the conveyor belt.
Second is the model’s failure to reflect the mutual influence that may occur between the boxes. Munns (1975) also points to an absence of linkages between the environment-political system-policy boxes. The dimensions chosen define these concepts simply. For instance, "political system" is defined as the dimensions of party competition, voter turnout, legislative apportionment, and division of party control. Yet, some theorists argue that it is dubious whether we can define or adequately represent such terms.

Related to this, Munns (1975) notes that the indicators do not adequately represent the dimension. Munns (1975) argues that the indicators chosen are often too narrow to reveal anything significant. Rather, what is needed are multiple indicators which consider the various aspects of a dimension. In terms of the environment as defined in the model, while the definition is broad, in practice, many mainstream model practitioners deal only with socio-economic variables as the input into the model. This, according to Munns (1975), leaves out at least three important forces: the political culture, federal policy, and regional variations. A third area of weakness in the model is its inability to determine which of the variables are most influential. As a result, a number of variables may be included but the impact of each may be insignificant. The model provides no way of determining this consequence. Overall then, it appears that the mainstream model is somewhat oversimplified (Munns, 1975). It fails to reflect the complex nature of relationships among the boxes and even within the boxes.

The mainstream model does, however, provide a reasonable framework. Using this framework. The researchers reviewed the work of other political science theorists. Still in search of a conceptual framework, she hoped that a further review would either present an appropriate framework, or would assist me in the development of one. The
researcher began the second stage of her review looking at the purpose of such a
framework. A model or framework should be applicable to many issues within a
particular policy sphere. Gil (1992) contends that:

A model of social policies is based on the premise that all social policies, in spite of differences in substance, objectives and scope, deal directly or indirectly with the same domains, and operate through the same processes of society existence. Thus policies dealing with such diverse issues as agriculture, trade, and industry; work and conservation; health, education and economic security; housing and transportation and taxation; are assumed to affect underlying common processes. A model of social policies should identify these domains and process and should reveal relations among them. (p. 20)

A primary purpose of any research study is to contribute to what is known about a
particular subject and related subjects. Within this context, a conceptual framework
serves several purposes. First, it provides those studying behaviours with a framework
within which they can observe patterns of behaviour. Second, a framework serves as a
point of reference from which the researcher can more extensively study observed
patterns of behaviour. Finally, the framework allows the researcher a context or a
perspective from which he or she can analyse and depict the behaviour as accurately and
realistically as possible. Hence, one can appreciate that the conceptual framework is a
critical element of a research study such as this. In this study a conceptual framework
will be used to further understand those variables that influence the agenda-setting
process and the social policy issue of child care.

In addition, the framework may provide a reference point for the examination of
related issues within the social policy context. In light of the important role the
framework has within the study, the researcher felt the framework had to reflect the
following: (1) the influence of internal and external variables on political agendas; (2) the
interaction between and among variables; (3) a reflection of the various “players” who may be involved or may influence the process; (4) a recognition of a number of communities and their dynamics on the agenda-setting process; (5) a plurality of political process and dynamics; and (6) the ability to incorporate and reflect different outcomes depending on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the variables, the nature of their interactions, and the impacts of different communities.

From a review of several existing frameworks of political decision-making and policy-making, it became evident that while frameworks meeting some of the criteria were available, a single framework meeting all of the pre-established criteria could not be found. As a result, the researcher developed her own unique conceptual framework. This section will begin with a review of those models that have influenced the proposed conceptual framework. The second section will review literature regarding variables that have influenced the policy-making and agenda-setting of governments. Finally, the proposed model will be presented.

The works of theorists such as Heclo (1974), Munns (1975), Pross (1986), Sabatier (1988), Doern and Phidd (1995), and Dyck (1996) have significantly influenced the framework used for this study. Pross (1986) himself drawing on other scholars, conceptualizes with the premise that each field of public policy is discrete and specialized, with its own constellation of participants. Also, the policy community consists of a grouping of government agencies, pressure groups, corporations, institutions, media people, and individuals, including academics, who have an interest
in that particular policy field and attempt to influence it. Pross (1986) suggests that every policy community be divided into two parts. The first he refers to as the "sub-government" part and includes a lead government agency (e.g., a Ministry branch), other policy-making agencies, and a small group of interests with the right to be consulted on a daily basis. This first group is clearly linked to government and is part of the daily running of internal government activities. The second part is referred to as the "attentive public" and is composed of other actors who may include members of other provincial governments, other parliamentarians, interested individuals, and leaders in smaller pressure groups. Such participants often spend considerable effort trying to legitimise
their participation and gaining the ear of the lead agency. When successful, such groups may become more involved in the process and may, in fact, be consulted more frequently by the government.

Although many have examined the processes surrounding policy development and change, the work of Heclo (1974) and Sabatier (1988) is of particular importance to this study. Heclo (1974) identified two sets of variables influencing policy change: environmental conditions arising from social, economic, and political changes; and the interaction of actors within a policy community. Within the context of this study, Heclo’s (1974) model was of particular importance because it identified two aspects of the process, namely the environment and the players, and brought them together to form one model. Sabatier (1988) later expanded on Heclo's (1974) work by developing a conceptual framework of policy change that extended over a period of time. This was a critical piece, since many can and will argue that policy development is an on-going function of government that does happen over an extended period of time. More specific to the Canadian context, Dyck (1996) proposed a six-phase process: initiation; priority-setting; policy formulation; legitimation; implementation; and interpretation (see Figure 4-5).
This framework was relevant to this study because it met four of the criteria established by the researcher. It encapsulated: (1) the influence of internal and external variables on political decision; (2) a reflection of the various "players" who may be involved or may
influence the process; (3) a recognition of a number of communities and their dynamics on the decision-making process; and (4) a plurality of political process and dynamics.

What was not evident in the model was the interaction among variables and the ability to incorporate and reflect different outcomes depending on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the variables, the nature of their interactions, and the impacts of different communities. In addition, while the model did acknowledge the initial impact of pressure groups, media, and other players, it was done so outside of the six phases. Dyck's (1996) model clearly emphasizes policy development, as will be done in this study, but with only limited attention given to agenda-setting.

In comparison, the work of Kingdon (1984) is significant in that it appears to give equal importance to the pre-decision activity as others give to the actual policy process. Kingdon's (1984) work is especially helpful in that it focuses on the pre-decision aspect of the policy and identifies what some of the players, or as the researcher will refer to later as variables, are within that sphere. Within government, he identifies the administration, civil servants, and elements within other structures as part of the pre-decision sphere. With respect to agenda-setting, Kingdon (1984) describes the top-down model as most accurately depicting how the administration, civil servants, and other structures impact and influence the agenda of government. He also acknowledges that each of the structures identified here may not equally influence the agenda. He suggests that, in fact, in comparison to the administration itself, civil servants may have a far greater impact on the implementation and alternative generation of activities than on the agenda-setting. Outside of government, Kingdon (1984) identifies interest groups, academics, media, and public opinion as the prominent variables influencing
governments' attention, or lack of attention, on specific issues. Finally, he explored various aspects of the pre-decision sphere without illustrating a model. Specifically, he refers to "sustained and marked changes in public opinion, repeated mobilization of people with intensely held preferences, and bandwagons onto which politicians of all persuasions climb" (Kingdon, 1984, p.1)

Within the Canadian context, Doern et al. (1992) present the Interplay Approach. This model, as illustrated in Figure 4-6, contains three components: (1) ideas; (2) structure; and (3) process.

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**Figure 4-6**

Doern and Phidd's Components of the Interplay Approach: Ideas, Structures, and Process Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDEAS</th>
<th>STRUCTURE</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *Ideologies*  
*Dominant Ideas*  
*Paradigms*  
*Specific Objectives* | *Prime Minister*  
*Cabinet*  
*Executive*  
*Bureaucracy*  
*Interest Groups*  
*Provincial Structures*  
*Policy Communities* | *Priority-Setting*  
*Expenditure*  
*Taxation*  
*Regulatory*  
*Public Enterprise* |
Ideas refer to the desired end result, which may be some action by the state or perhaps the
prevention of state action by the public, individuals, or groups. Structures refer to those
organizations through which and by which public policy is influenced and made. This
would include interest groups, policy communities, the bureaucracy, as well as the head
of state and Cabinet. The final component of the process refers to the uniform
relationships and behaviour flowing from policy and decision-making activity in any
government. Examples would include priority-setting structures, taxation and regulatory
capabilities amongst others.

Upon reviewing this model, the researcher found several strengths applicable to
this study. First, the influence of variables such as ideology were seen as a dominant
force in terms of influencing policy. In addition, again, is the notion of the policy
community. Also of significance was the model’s recognition of a uniform process.
What was specifically of relevance to this study was the model’s endorsement of the
notion that while the process of policy making may be uniform, the way in which the
process is influenced will vary, depending on the variables contained in the Ideas and
Structure components.

After completing this overview of literature regarding political decision-making
models, the researcher concluded that an adequate framework that met the criteria set out
earlier in the paper could not be located. So, using various elements of the models
reviewed, the researcher developed a framework (see Figure 4-7).
The proposed framework is reflective of the review of literature on variables, child care, existing models, and the researcher's own experiences. A number of common variables were consistently identified within a number of models but were also examined at length within their own domains. For instance, various members of the media and academics have extensively examined the role of the media on policy-making and agenda-setting of
governments. Similarly, political scientists have studied in great detail how public opinion influences the decisions of politicians. In trying to assess which variables were most relevant, the researcher relied on the framework developed for this study based on her own experience, the research of other academics, and their analyses of the ways in which variables can influence politics. In addition, the researcher considered which variables also appeared in the models reviewed earlier. The proposed framework was used during key informant interviews (as will be discussed in Chapter 5 Research and Methodology) and as part of the analysis.
Chapter 5
Research Design and Methodology

Research Objectives

The broad objective of this research study is to gain some understanding of the variables that influence political agendas specific to social policy and to illustrate the dynamics of those variables in a conceptual framework. Through this comprehensive examination of the child care issue on political agendas, the researcher also hopes to achieve the following goals:

1) Identify and gain insight into the political elements of the child care debate in Ontario;

2) Gain insight into the philosophical view of child care from the perspective of the three dominant political parties in Ontario;

3) Identify some of the variables influencing the political agendas in Ontario;

4) Develop a framework for understanding the agenda-setting process; and

5) Develop an improved understanding of the relationship between the political response to child care and other social policies.

To achieve these objectives the researcher felt that a time period during which all three parties had governed was needed. This would allow the study to capture a more comprehensive analysis of the dynamics influencing political agendas. To this end, a review of Ontario governments revealed that between 1983 and 1996 all three political parties (Liberal, Progressive Conservative, New Democratic Party) were in power and at one time or another were opposition.
Identification of Data Sources

In view of the time period to be study the researcher then tried to identify key sources of data that would provide the basis for an historical account of child care in Ontario politics. Through an investigation of available documentation, the following data sources were identified:

1) Individuals who were involved in the child care debate through politics (this included former Ministers of Community and Social Services, Deputy Ministers, provincial politicians, advocates, senior civil servants);

2) Print media limited to one local newspaper and one national;

3) Hansard (a transcript of debates, committee hearings, and questions occurring in the Ontario legislature; and

4) Published and unpublished government reports.

Each data source provided unique information that would, it was hoped, aid in determining the variables influencing the agenda-setting process.

Figure 5-1 illustrates the process followed to achieve the objectives of this study:
Step One: Development of Conceptual Framework reflective of the agenda-setting process

Step Two: Identification of data Sources

Step Three: Development of Content Analysis Guides

Step Four: Analysis of data to confirm or alter conceptual framework

Revised Conceptual Framework

In particular, the process followed was useful to verify the validity of the proposed conceptual framework. All data was used to prove or disprove the various elements of the framework.
**Data Collection**

The primary and most special data source in this study was a collection of interviews. Fifteen interviews were conducted. Each interview was approximately one hour long. Interviews were requested with those individuals who had a direct involvement in government child care policies at the provincial level. The interviews included key representatives from the following categories: (1) politicians; (2) deputy ministers within the Ministries of Community and Social Services and Education and Training; (3) former civil servants from the child care branch of the Ministry of Community and Social Services; and (4) child care advocates. Twenty individuals were contacted, five in each category. The interview questions were developed with the recognition that respondents were unlikely to have more than one hour for the interview. In keeping with the conceptual framework, interview questions were categorized into four areas: (1) attitudes and perceptions; (2) change agents and forces; (3) leadership; and (4) process. These areas reflected the components of the proposed conceptual framework discussed in Chapter 4. An interview guide (see Appendix C) was developed and pre-tested on two individuals. Minor changes were made to ensure the clarity and intent of questions. This semi-structured interview guide was used as a template to direct, but not limit, interviews. Interviews were adapted to ensure that the interest of the participant was captured accurately and in as much depth as possible. Thus, issues which arose during the interview, were freely pursued in order to assure participants’ satisfaction with their contribution.

Access to individuals was largely made possible through a number of current and former politicians at the provincial level. Many of these were known to the researcher.
through work at the Ontario Legislature at Queen’s Park. These individuals were helpful in identifying key respondents who had been involved with the child care issue. Second, in many instances it was only through these connections that individuals could be located. Finally, because of the referral, many respondents seemed more comfortable and willing to participate in the study.

Each interview, with the exception of one, which occurred on the telephone, was conducted in person. Initial contact with each interviewee was made by phone and followed up with a letter of invitation (see Appendix A). Two days after the letter had been sent, the researcher again phoned the interviewee to determine his or her willingness to participate. Once the interviewee’s participation was assured, a time for the interview was set. At the beginning of each interview, the researcher provided a consent form (see Appendix B) which was signed by the interviewee and the researcher. In the case of the phone interview, the letter of consent was faxed to the respondent who signed it and faxed it back to the researcher. In each case the researcher outlined the nature of the study and indicated that anonymity would be respected if desired, prior to the actual interview. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Permission to tape record interviews was obtained from all participants. Once interviews had been transcribed, the interview content analysis guide was used to categorize information and provide a more organized format for identifying any patterns and trends found throughout the interviews.

Newspaper articles focusing on any aspect of child care between 1983 to 1996 were collected. To keep the data manageable, the researcher focused on one provincial or local paper (The Toronto Star) and one national paper (The Globe and Mail). The
analysis of one local newspaper and one national allowed the researcher to compare provincial and national interest in the child care issue. Data collected through the review of newspapers was primarily focused on attitudes and perceptions and linked back to the proposed conceptual framework. In total approximately 561 articles were reviewed. This collection of newspaper articles was organized by date. The articles will be given to the Childcare Research and Resource Unit upon completion of this study.

Published documents were primarily obtained through the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Legislative Library at Queen’s Park. Unpublished documents were obtained through Freedom of Information and Privacy Requests and other networks available to the researcher. A total of 11 unpublished documents, primarily Cabinet proposals, four published reports, and two political documents were analyzed (See Appendix I).

The final data source was a transcript (Hansard) of all questions asked in the provincial parliament related to child care. This is a matter of public record that was obtained from the Legislative Library. Using the Hansard Index, each child care question and debate occurring between 1983 and 1996 was identified. A transcript of the debate was then photocopied and sorted by year. These volumes will be given to the Childcare Research and Resource Unit upon completion of this study.

**Instruments**

A simple cursory review of data would not yield information in a useful format. Furthermore, since the verification of the conceptual framework was an objective of the study, information had to be analyzed in a manner that would lend itself to this task. As a
result, the researcher determined that the development of Content Analysis Guides (see Appendix D,E,F,G) would facilitate the extraction of relevant data from each source in an organized and meaningful manner that would contribute to the objectives of this study. As a result, Guides were developed for each data source, tested, and modified by the researcher before being implemented for this study. Analysis Guides enhanced the researcher's ability to: (1) gather information in a consistent manner; (2) record the uniqueness of each data source; (3) recognize and record the diversity of issues identified; (4) identify the various elements within the policy community; (5) identify key players; (6) test the accuracy of the proposed conceptual framework; and (7) enable the researcher to collect a consistent data base and also collect the unique type of data offered by the four identified sources.

Each content analysis guide was developed to record the unique information contained in a particular source. In addition guides allowed the researcher to consistently collect information such as issues, concerns, and recommended solutions. In all cases the researcher recorded whether the nature of the data was in favour of more affordable high quality child care, opposed, or neutral. In all cases, the content analysis guide was organized to reflect the conceptual framework. Each guide allowed the researcher to collect and then organize the information in categories. This methodology also assisted the researcher to reduce any personal bias she has on the issue from contaminating the data.

The Interview Content Analysis Guide was then used to extract information relevant to the political agenda-setting process. This Guide focused on all areas of the proposed conceptual framework. This included the respondents views on child care, their
perceptions about public opinion about child care, and their opinions about variables that influence the political agenda. The Guide also enabled the researcher to organize, record, and tabulate response to the proposed Conceptual Framework. Interview respondents were shown Figure 4-7 (the Proposed Conceptual Framework) and asked to comment on the accuracy of the illustration. Specifically, comments regarding the importance of variables, missing variables, or the sequence of events were probed. Transferring responses from the transcript to the Guide enabled the researchers to capture qualitative and quantitative data since answers were tabulated. Qualitative data included respondent reaction while qualitative data reflected frequency of similar responses among respondents.

Newspaper Articles were sorted by year. The content analysis guide was then used to capture the main issue in the article as well other aspects such as the type of article (e.g., opinion or factual account) whether the article presented a position in favour or opposed to more government involvement in child care services and the frequency of coverage. This format allowed the researcher to capture a number of characteristics surrounding print coverage of the child care issue.

The Hansard was sorted by year. The Hansard Content Analysis Guide allowed the researcher to capture the frequency of the child care issue being raised in the legislature and the tenor of any questions or debates. The content analysis guide was then used to collect and organize information regarding the nature of questions asked, the party asking the questions, and whether the questions urged more or less government involvement in the delivery and funding of child care services.
Finally, the Document Analysis Guide was developed and used for all government published and unpublished documents. The objective of this Guide was to capture the tenor of reports (for instance, were the reports in support or opposed to government involvement in child care), and the general content. In addition, the Document Analysis Guide allowed the researcher to capture any “visions” of child care particular governments may have had.

**Data Analysis**

In view of the broad objective of this study, to gain some understanding of the agenda-setting process, the information collected through the Content Analysis Guides was reviewed within the context of the proposed agenda-setting framework. Quantitative and qualitative data were used to verify the inclusion of variables in the model, the relationships among variables, and the overall process. For instance, interview data provided quantitative data about the frequency variables were identified by respondents. Interview respondents also identified any variables that were not identified and spoke to the nature of the relationship among variables. Newspaper articles also provided both qualitative and quantitative information. The frequency issues were raised provided insight into the variables that influence the process. Articles also provided rich commentary about public opinion, government tactics, and the dynamics among variables. Hansard and other documents each provided similar information. The descriptive data gathered from each source provided a unique data set that was useful in the revision of the proposed conceptual framework.
**Data Quality Control**

Several strategies were applied to ensure the quality of the data collected. In the case of the key informant interviews, the recording and transcribing of interviews was a step taken to ensure quality of data. Recorded interviews ensured accuracy and allowed the researcher to listen to responses as often as necessary to create accurate transcripts. In the case of the newspaper articles, a clear definition of all categories applied in the content analysis was prepared for consistency. To ensure the quality of each category of data separately and collectively, the researcher also considered the following: (1) the plausibility of the data; (2) the consistency of the data; (3) the level of detail present in the data as determined by its source; and (4) the relationship between data sources.

**Confidentiality**

As indicated above prior to beginning all interviews, respondents were asked to sign a consent form regarding confidentiality. The form required participants to indicate whether they would prefer their names not be used in the study or whether they were comfortable with their names used. The majority of respondents did agree to have their names used. However, confidentiality will largely be maintained for all respondents due to the manner in which the data has been combined to form a data set. In addition, because the nature of the study is to identify any trends and patterns in the agenda-setting process of government, responses are considered collectively rather than individually. However, where direct quotations may be used, only those consenting are attributed.

**Limitations**
The purpose of any research is to further understand the phenomenon under study. In doing so, some obvious limitations will be set by the availability of data. For instance, in this study, the data are limited to the respondents interviewed; however, the respondents are by no means the only individuals who affected child care policy at the provincial level.

The second limitation is the generalization of single case study findings. Results may not be entirely applicable to all related areas. Nonetheless, it is hoped that they will contribute to our understanding of related areas, even if only in some small way.

The perspective from which we view any situation, including the results from a study such as this, will impact on the type of data collected. The conceptual framework applied in this study is being used for the first time.

**Definitions**

*Public opinion* – the attitudes of the public based on sample groups and by collected through opinion polls

*Print media* - daily newspapers

*Media* - television, radio, newsprint

*Child care* – programs or home child care provided according to the guidelines and standards of the Day Nurseries

*Early childhood education* - an educational service provided by Early Childhood Educators and regulated by the Day Nurseries Act

*Regulations* - those rules established and governed to ensure standards are enforced

* Licensing* - the action undertaken by government allowing an organization to provide child care and Early Childhood Education services.
Chapter 6
Child Care in Ontario: Past and Present

Historical Development of Child Care: The First Roots of Child Care

To glean some understanding of the political dynamics surrounding child care an historical review of child care in Ontario was undertaken. The first child care centre in Ontario was opened in 1890 (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 5). The opening of this centre is attributed to Dr. J.L. Hughes, the educationist responsible for the opening of kindergartens in the public school system. Hughes believed that child care, while providing care for working mothers, also prevented delinquency. In this context, Hughes’s views reflect the progressive attitudes of many child care advocates today who see the service as far more than an employment support.

Passage of The Mothers’ Allowances Act in 1920 led to a further decline in the already limited use of child care. This Act appeared to articulate the then commonly held view of society that the only acceptable reason for a mother to work was financial need. Since it was more desirable for mothers to remain at home, the provision of an allowance would address any financial needs of mothers -- despite the small amount.

This time period, the 1920s, was also the beginning of the first training program in early childhood education. In 1926, the Institute of Child Study, which studied the development of young children, was opened at the University of Toronto. Soon after this opening, a few half-day nursery programs were launched, and existing centres began to introduce elements of educational programming that had been developed at the Institute. This was a significant event, since it marked the turn of what was traditionally seen as custodial care to educational guidance through developmentally appropriate stimulation.
The War-time Period and Child Care

Some suggest that society's view regarding mother's role in the home changed with the onset of World War II. During the War, it became somewhat acceptable for a mother to work outside her home, especially if she was working in a war-related industry. In 1942, the Government of Ontario entered into a federal-provincial agreement for the cost-sharing of day care for children whose mothers were employed in essential industry. The sudden increase in demand led to the opening of more centres across the province, especially in the Toronto area. The provincial Department of Public Welfare, the arm of government responsible for administering the federal-provincial agreement, established a Day Nurseries Branch. Fees paid by parents covered approximately one-third of the operating costs of the day care program, with the remainder of costs covered by the federal-provincial agreement on a 50-50 basis. By 1946, 28 child care centres were in operation, serving 1,200 children aged 2 to 5 and 41 centres serving 3,000 children aged 6 to 14 (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 6). The end of the war led to the lapse of the federal-provincial agreement.

Post-war Child Care

Advocates of child care demanded that the provincial Government continue financial support of child care. This outcry led to the first Day Nurseries Act in 1946 (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p.6). The primary features of the Act included the licensing of all nurseries, regardless of auspices, regular inspection, and the administration of provincial grants for municipal day nursery programs, which provided 50% of the net operating cost of nurseries run or supported by the municipalities.
Growth of child care facilities during the two post-war decades was slow but steady. Considerable growth of parent-organized and parent-operated half-day programs was most noticeable. By 1965 nearly 400 licensed nurseries had places for more than 11,000 children (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981). It was also during this time that the Nursery Education Association of Ontario (now the Association of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario) was formed. Its primary focus was, and continues to be, the provision of professional development opportunities for early childhood educators.

**General Description of the System Today**

Responsibility for children in child care under the age of ten in Ontario primarily falls under the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Currently, this Ministry’s mandate includes setting licensing standards, and the cost sharing of fee subsidies. In addition, the Ministry provides direct-operating grants and wage-enhancement grants directly to licensed group and private home day care programs to address the poor wages and benefits of child care workers. Such funding is more generous to the non-profit sector than the commercial sector. While licensed child care centres are affected by numerous pieces of legislation including the Community and Social Services Act (Ontario, 1980), the Child and Family Services Act (Ontario, 1984), and the Health Protection and Promotion Act (Ontario, 1989), these programs are primarily regulated and funded through the Day Nurseries Act (1984) and its related Regulation (Ontario, 1988). The Day Nurseries Act (1984) was originally passed in 1946 but has been revised a number of times since then.
Licensed child care in Ontario takes two forms: centre-based care and home-based care. Both can be operated by the for-profit sector or by non-profit organizations, including community or parent boards of directors, municipalities, schools, colleges, First Nations, and off-reserve Aboriginal communities. In the case of private home caregivers, the Act requires that the agency supervising the caregiver be licensed and not the individual caregivers themselves. The Act provides the necessary authority for the Ministry of Community and Social Services to establish minimum standards for the operation of both settings. Standards are prescribed for the physical environment, staff qualifications, staff-child ratios, group size, nutrition, health and safety, and organization and management. In administering the Act, the Ministry also conducts annual inspections. Home-day care providers not supervised by an agency are not expected to meet any standards beyond that of caring for fewer than five children. The legislation also provides funding for fee subsidies to assist families who have “demonstrated financial need” or who have children with handicapping conditions. Figure 6-1 illustrates the number of licensed spaces in Ontario. The Ministry estimates that there are currently 73,400 fee subsidies for parents (Ontario, 1996).
The vast majority of these are only available for licensed child care (exceptions are made when licensed care is not available). The Ministry of Community and Social Services also estimates that 71% of the Ministry’s child care budget was spent on subsidizing fees of lower-income parents using regulated child care. It is further estimated that approximately 47%, or nearly half the spaces in the licensed child care system, are funded through such fee subsidies. The amount of the subsidy will vary from a full to a partial fee subsidy. The majority of subsidized families pay a minimum user
Eligibility for a fee subsidy is determined through a needs test administered by the municipalities. This current method is under review and an alternate method is being proposed.

As noted earlier, the child care system is also impacted by several other pieces of Ontario legislation. The Ministry of Community and Social Services Act (1980) serves as a general authority and funding vehicle for social services in situations in which no other statutory authority exists. This legislation has enabled governments to fund research and development initiatives as well as various other child care initiatives such as child care resource centres, flexible services projects, and direct operating grants. In addition, the Child and Family Services Act (1984) is used to fund additional support services provided through child care centres for programs focusing on developmentally and physically handicapped children and their families. Services vary from children’s mental health programs, infant developmental programs, as well as speech therapy, physiotherapy, family counselling, and treatment services to parent relief. It is also through the Child and Family Services Act (1984) that the professional is required to report suspicion of child abuse. The Health Promotion and Protection Act (1989) contains a number of sections relevant to the operation of licensed day care in Ontario. For instance, the Act sets out requirements concerning food preparation, hygiene standards, and health inspection in day care centres. In addition, it sets out requirements for the reporting and control of communicable diseases and for immunization of children and staff. Most recently, the Education Act (1994) allows school boards to hold the license for a child care centre. Although the system is primarily funded and regulated through the province, funding comes from three levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal.
At the federal level, up until March 31, 1996, the Federal Government cost-shared child care expenditures under the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). Since April 1, 1996 agencies, traditionally funded through CAP, and other existing federal transfers for health and post-secondary education, received their funding through a single block fund called the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST). Under CAP some funding went directly to parents which is no longer the case with the CHST. The money is given to the provinces which then allocate the funds to the various sectors. In addition, on their personal income tax return, parents can deduct eligible child care expenses of up to $5,000 for each child under seven years of age and up to $3,000 for each child aged seven and up to, but not yet fifteen years old upon providing receipts. In Ontario, the contribution through this deduction is about $100 million annually in foregone tax revenue.

At the provincial level, in 1995/96 the province allocated up to $549 million to support licensed and informal child care programs. An additional $39 million was spent in the form of a child care allowance through the Ministry’s Supports to Employment Program (STEP) which is aimed at helping those on social assistance return to work. A further $25 million was provided through the Ministry of Education and Training for students receiving Ontario Student Assistance (OSAP) and in need of child care (OSAP no longer exists). Figure 6-2 illustrates the provincial expenditure on child care in Ontario from 1983 to 1996. System funding is more favorable for non-profit centres. For instance, government wage enhancement is more generous for staff in non-profit centres than those in the profit centres – this illustrates the systems preference for the not-for-profit sector. It is estimated that the licensed child care sector has the capacity to provide
care for approximately 137,000 Ontario children. Ontario has close to 3,200 child care centres. This includes 2,640 non-profit and 540 private child care centres.

Approximately 8,300 home-based child care facilities provide care for 19,200 children.

At the municipal level, it is estimated that collectively municipalities spent approximately $63 million on child care in 1995/96. Until 1998 municipal involvement in child care was discretionary. As a result of amalgamation municipalities will be required to provide child care services. The Ministry estimates that 94 of Ontario’s municipalities currently participate in the funding of child care services. Collectively, financial support for licensed child care exceeded $775 million in 1997. Parent fees are not included in this figure and would be an additional amount. The municipal role may vary from participation in cost-sharing arrangements to the provision of services, the purchase of services, and inspections similar to those run by the province. Figure 6-1 illustrates the Provincial contribution.

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**Figure 6-2**

*Year Over Year Provincial Expenditure on Child Care*

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A Context for the Child Care Debate

The debate on child care has steadily evolved in Ontario and has heightened during the past decade at both the provincial and federal levels. Governments have responded in a variety of ways, including proposals for tax adjustments that recognize the cost of care, and the further entrenchment of child care subsidies in our welfare system so that those in greatest need have access to some form of subsidized care. As aptly noted by Powell (1994), the groundswell of interest and concern associated with child care parallels the basic demographic, economic, and social changes that have occurred in Canada. Despite the large number of children born in the 1950s, and the simultaneous increase of female participation in the labour force over that decade and the next (in 1951 less than 25% of Canadian women were in the labour force and by 1971 40% were), day care was hardly mentioned in party platforms in Ontario prior to the 1970s. It was only in the early 1970s under the specific impulse of feminism, that the call for day care appeared in party platforms.
Chapter 7
The Provincial Government, the Three Dominant Political Parties, and Their Views of Child Care in Ontario

State Role and the System of Government in Ontario

Since the thrust of this study is about the variables influencing political agendas, a basic understanding of the structure of Ontario’s system of government will be helpful in terms of setting a context for the study. The reader who is familiar with this well-known structure is urged to skip to the next section (the account here is rudimentary, but prerequisite to grasping the process).

The Ontario Parliament is comprised of three distinct parts: the formal executive refer to the Lieutenant Governor, the political executive made up of the Premier and Cabinet Ministers, plus the Legislative Assembly and its offices. In Canada, the distribution of powers and responsibilities is set out in Sections 91 and 92 of the British North America Act (1867) and the Constitution Act (1982). In addition, the limitations and restrictions on the powers of both levels of government are set out in judicial decisions of the United Kingdom Privy Council prior to 1949 and the Supreme Court of Canada since 1949. These powers will be amended in the future through constitutional discussions between the province and the federal government. Let me now briefly examine each of the three parts of Ontario’s parliamentary system and the relevance of this system to the study at hand.

The official Head of State of Canada is the Queen. She empowers the Lieutenant Governor, the nominal Head of State at the provincial level, with the responsibility of representing the Sovereign in the province. Appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister of Canada, he or she has the responsibility of
opening, closing and dissolving the Legislature. The Lieutenant Governor also swears in the Premier and Cabinet. The Lieutenant Governor must also sign all Bills giving them Royal Assent so that they can become law.

As the leader of the governing party, the Premier of Ontario is the chief spokesperson for the Government in the Legislative Assembly. However, in terms of decision-making it is the Cabinet and Cabinet Office that are the focal point for decision-making in the Ontario government. It is responsible for initiating, approving, and executing Government policy. This study will examine the way in which decisions made by Cabinet and Cabinet Office are influenced. It is Cabinet that attempts to set the broad direction and priorities of the Government, decide the content of the Speech from the Throne, and co-ordinate the Government’s legislative program for each session. Cabinet is linked to all ministries and central agencies of Government. The Cabinet Office provides the administrative services and policy analysis for Cabinet and its Committees. Specific to policy, it is the function of Cabinet Office to undertake expenditure reviews, co-ordinate the allocation process, and assist the Ministry of Treasury and Economics as well as the Management Board of Cabinet in developing the budgets among the ministries. As part of this process, the Cabinet Office reviews legislative proposals and decisions, directing the Government’s legislative program in consultation with the Government House Leader and individual ministers. In addition, the Cabinet Office assists in the preparation of the Speech from the Throne, and makes briefing arrangements for the Premier, Cabinet and other committees of Cabinet such as the Policy and Priorities Board. Finally, it provides both administrative and policy support to all Cabinet Committees.
The final component of Ontario's parliament is the Legislative Assembly, its committees, and offices. The general role of the Legislative branch is to revise and legitimize major government polices and proposals for expenditure and taxation. Through the opposition parties in the legislature, the Government is audited, critiqued, and held accountable. In total there are currently 130 Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) elected from 130 electoral districts. Within the Legislature, several steps are involved in passing a Bill into law and at various stages the Bill can be modified. The Bill is read in the House three times. At second reading the Bill is debated in the House and a vote may be taken to pass or kill a piece of legislation. If passed, it is then moved on to either Committee of the Whole or a standing committee for refinement. If the Bill is sent to Committee of the Whole, minor amendments may be made during a clause-by-clause examination without direct public input. In contrast, standing committees of the Legislature allow for submissions and presentations by the public and interest groups.

Ideas for public policy may come from several sources. One may be an electoral commitment made by the governing party. A second may be the public service, which among its other duties, is responsible for offering policy advice to the Government. Third, ideas may come from public outcry or, ultimately, the pressure imposed by interest groups. Once the policy process has been initiated, the idea begins a lengthy journey. This study focuses on the policy process itself, but rather on where the idea comes from and how it actually enters the process. Specific to the issue of child care, it appears that all three political parties in Ontario have yet to determine the role of the State in the funding, delivery, and administration of child care services. Friendly (1994) stated:
Canada has not made a choice about whether child care/early childhood development should be a public service or a private responsibility. Although there is clearly a strong public interest in high quality child care, failure to make this choice means the existing market model is maintained by default. (Friendly, 1994, p. 6)

The extent of the State's role will vary among parties in Ontario. The structure of Ontario's government does allow opportunity for public input. In addition to public input, several other variables may be influencing the system. In this thesis, I will try to provide some observations about the variables which, in the case of Ontario’s child care system, appear to have influenced politicians and policy makers.

**An Introduction to the Political History of Child Care**

To briefly recapitulate, this chapter will focus on the political history of child care in Ontario between 1975 and 1997 with a brief overview of the time period prior to 1975. The position taken by the three major political parties in Ontario, the Progressive Conservative (PC) Party, the Liberal Party, and the New Democratic Party (NDP) in regard to child care from 1975 to 1997 is summarized. To provide a framework for analysis, the political landscape was reviewed. In Figure 7-1 Dyck (1993) illustrates the spectrum of political ideology in Canadian politics.
The view of those interviewed in relation to the political history is also explored. Through this examination, this researcher aims to provide some observations about what variables have influenced parties on the child care issue.

The facts, as recorded in various sources such as Hansard and political party documents, are arranged to present the views of the three major political parties in Ontario. While the emphasis of this paper is on the political parties, information gleaned from interview responses is employed in an effort to explain the position of each.
The Political Parties

Within Ontario's political system, traditionally Progressive Conservatives (PC) are said to reflect the views of business, while the New Democrats have traditionally been aligned with labour. The Liberals, wanting to be seen as in the middle, try to represent the views of both while also trying to capture the views of "ordinary" Ontario citizens who are not tied to labour or business. Within political circles, many will postulate that the most difficult message to "sell" is that of the Liberal since many will see them as too close to either the right or left of the spectrum. In the 1995 provincial election, many argued that the Liberals failed to clearly define themselves and their issues. On some issues they resembled the Conservative Party (i.e., welfare reform) while on other issues (i.e., education) they were more closely positioned to the NDP. Liberals will argue that while this may be the case, it is a more "balanced" view of what Ontario needs and not an extreme position at one end of the spectrum. Frequently, political analysts have differentiated among parties by examining the nature of their policies. Using this approach Lowe (1969) argues that traditionally and generally North American Liberals are seen to favour the use of government to bring about social change, usually in the direction of greater equality.

In comparison, the Conservatives are typically opposed to the use of government for such purposes. Liberals often spoke to the need for public policies to "correct" injustices, while Conservatives either found the existing order satisfactory or that change should occur naturally through social processes. Lowe (1969) goes on to suggest that today, "The most important difference between Liberals and Conservatives, Republicans
and Democrats - however they define themselves - is to be found in the interest groups they identify with" (Lowe, 1969, p. 690).

Others such as George and Wilding (1976) present an interpretation of the right, in particular the New Right, as a view that sees a major reduction in the role of government but also as a condition for progress. What George et al. (1976) define as reluctant collectivists, otherwise known as Liberals, are seen as an ill-defined group which, unlike the Conservatives, have a lack of faith in an unregulated free market system. They believe in a government-managed economy, but are also enthusiastic about the role of private enterprise. The third group, referred to as the Fabian socialists, somewhat comparable with certain New Democrats, stress three central values -- equality, freedom, and fellowship along with two derivative values -- democratic participation and humanitarianism.

Despite the differentiation offered by analysts, some propose that regardless of political ideology, parties actively develop positions based on what they perceive to be the viewpoints of the electors. Hall et al. (1975) suggest that perhaps the very fact that the electorate will often complain about the lack of distinction among parties, the apparent similarity of parties can be explained using this approach. Or perhaps, suggest Hall et al. (1975), once public opinion is known via opinion polls and research, party workers try to bridge the gap between party policies and public opinion. Based on the work of Nevitte, Bakvis and Gibbins (1989), Figure 7-2 clarifies the position of the Red Tory influence in the Conservative Party and also tries to distinguish among social democrats, welfare liberals, and Red Tories. While Red Tories are still seen as elitist on the continuum ranging from equality to elitism, they approach policy from a more
collective view in contrast to more traditional Tories who have a more individualistic approach.

Figure 7.2
Nevitt, Bakvis, and Gibbins Ideological Contours

Source: Nevitt, Bakvis, & Gibbins, 1989

Based on the researcher’s experience at Queen’s Park, it became clear that ideology continues to be a characteristic of at least two parties -- the Conservatives and the New Democrats. The Liberals, while somewhat ideological in the notion of fairness for all, tend to be more fluid in terms of where they sit on the political spectrum. In this context, only Liberals can be “friends” of both labour and business at the same time. This is seen by many as failing to be distinct and committed to a particular position. The researcher’s observations have also led her to the realization that political parties expend enormous resources -- financial and human -- in an effort to influence and form public opinion.
This is done primarily through public awareness strategies, the media, and question period in the provincial parliament.

The response of political parties to education related issues (for the purpose of this study quality child care is seen as an educational issue), will be influenced by many variables identified in this study. Of these, ideology may have a unique capacity to influence agendas. With information gathered from archival material and the responses from interviews, the researcher will portray how ideology has influenced not only party positions, but also how other variables influence all three parties and how in turn, parties differ in response to these forces. What will also be gleaned from this review is the notion of direct and indirect impact on policy. While the party in government determines policy direction, this review suggests that throughout the period explored, opposition parties and their leaders have at times had both a direct and indirect and direct impact on government. According to Yukl (1994) direct effect refers to “decisions or actions that have an immediate impact on what is done, how it is done, or how efficiently it is done” (p. 7). Indirect effects refer to leader actions that are slower to be felt but often more durable (Yukl, 1994). This evidence in this review does suggest that all three parties, while in government and in opposition, have had both direct and indirect impact on the shape of political agendas, and the subsequent child care policies that have emerged.

**The Progressive Conservatives From 1975 to the Present**

Historically, the Conservative Party began as a coalition of English and French businessmen from Upper and Lower Canada in the mid 1980s. Today, the Conservative Party is still seen to represent the views of the business community (Dyck, 1996).
Conservatism traditionally has two variants. The first seeks to liberate the individual from the restrictions of the state. The second, often referred to as the Red Tory (or the Davis Tories in Ontario), views society as an organic whole and emphasizes community values as well as individualism. This brand of Conservatism is rooted in the British Conservatives and is perhaps closer to the Canadian Conservative. In view of this, the Conservative position on child care in Ontario is, in fact, consistent with the Party’s ideological roots.

Election publications of the PC Party tended to emphasize the personality of the leader, rather than policy positions, between the early 1940s to the mid-1980s. Since the PC Party was in government during that time, the government’s position was regarded as the party position. During the 1960s through the 1970s, government documents described the objectives of the Day Nurseries Branch as follows:

1) To ensure, as had been the basic objective of the Branch since its formation, that all children attending day nurseries throughout Ontario receive the care and guidance necessary for their optimum growth and social development in a safe, healthy environment;

2) To provide opportunities in day nurseries for children with physical, developmental and/or social handicaps to achieve their physical, developmental, and social potential; and

3) To enable sole-support parents and others with low family incomes to go to work or take advantage of training programs that would improve their ability to provide for their families. (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 7)

While such policy statements suggest considerable support for child care, it is primarily supportive of the welfare-based child care system. The Progressive Conservatives supported in principle many policies but seldom accompanied that support with financial resources. The lack of support for capital expenditures was evident as the number of
centres failed to increase and in Toronto remained at 15 from 1956 to 1960 (Towers & Cameron, 1974, p. 7).

The number of women participating in Ontario's workforce continued to increase through the 1960s. Current statistics (Kyle et al., 1991) show that 500,000 women were participating in the workforce by 1960. By the mid-1980s this number had more than doubled (Statistics Canada, 1988). This increased participation of women in the labour force was matched by an increased demand for child care. This led to the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) which was introduced in 1966 (Canada, 1966). CAP provided a vehicle through which the federal government provided funding to the provinces for social programs such as child care. The federal government's response to the increased need for such programs, including child care, was the CAP. CAP would profoundly influence child care services in Ontario over the next 30 years. Kyle et al. (1991), identified the following as some of the key features of CAP as it related to child care in Ontario:

1) The Ontario government continued the tradition of cost-sharing with municipalities, but reduced the provincial portion to 30% (the municipalities being required to provide the remaining 20%). As a consequence, a share of the costs of fee subsidies came out of local taxes. Local groups were not eligible for federal cost-sharing dollars if the municipality was unwilling or financially unable to share in the costs of subsidizing fees.

2) Program funding was provided indirectly through the mechanism of subsidizing child care fees for eligible families. Eligibility was determined by a needs test which was required under the social assistance provisions of CAP (most other provinces use an income test under the welfare provisions of CAP -- introduced in 1972). Children were eligible for subsidies up to the age of 10.

3) Municipalities and Indian bands operated programs directly and were later authorized to “purchase services”; that is, to provide fee subsidies for families using non-governmental (non-profit and commercially operated) programs for children whose parents were deemed to be “in need.” (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 7)
Kyle et al. (1991) go on to note that the introduction of subsidies for low-income parents has been especially significant because: (1) it set up a mechanism that gave existing programs a more stable funding base and allowed for some expansion of day care programs; and (2) it allowed for federal cost-sharing of fee subsidies in commercially operated programs, thus laying the groundwork for the growth of for-profit programs in Ontario.

In 1971, the Conservative government took a significant step by agreeing to pay 80% of capital costs for new day care centres. While the provincial Conservative government took most of the credit for this initiative, it was prepared to take this step since the province was reimbursed 50% under CAP from the federal government. Some $10 million was initially invested in this initiative. Between the province and the federal government, 80% of capital costs were covered. Municipalities were expected to contribute the remaining 20%. Soon after, the new William Davis government of Progressive Conservative agreed to pay the full capital costs of new day care spaces completed by July 1972, thus temporarily taking on the 20% costs generally paid by municipalities. As a direct result of this initiative, 62 new centres with a total capacity of 2,850 were established (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 8). In 1974, the Conservative government introduced a $15 million capital grants program, this time emphasizing the renovation of existing buildings. This program resulted in the creation of an additional 3,600 additional places. Child care advocates argued that the Conservatives had only partially addressed the growing demand for child care. These initiatives provided for capital costs but did not provide financial subsidies to make child
care affordable. In the eyes of advocates, once again, the availability of affordable child care was limited by the actions of the government. The ideology of the Conservative Party allowed such a move only if it was targeted towards those in greatest financial need with a limited government role.

By 1973, more than one-third of mothers of preschoolers and half of the mothers of school-aged children were working outside the home (Pence, 1991, p. 370). Such statistics led to the recognition at both the provincial and federal levels of government that child care services needed to be expanded. Once again, however, the Progressive Conservative government of Ontario continued to issue policy statements that supported the increased expansion of child care but failed to provide the financial resources. Subsidy payments have never reflected the actual costs incurred by child care centres. The costs of operating a program that met provincially set standards were not recognized. In addition, for many families who did not qualify for fee subsidies, the full cost was not affordable. The choice of the Conservative government was to provide only low income families with subsidies, entrenching child care in the welfare system so that middle class families, for whom the cost of licensed care was unaffordable, were forced to use unlicensed care. Kyle et al. (1991) poses that the choice of the Conservative government to ignore the true cost of child care was what led to poor staff salaries in the field of child care. In effect, the bonuses for staff salaries indirectly subsidized child care.

In 1974, then Provincial Secretary for Social Development, Margaret Birch, issued a statement to the legislature on *Day Care Services to Children*. This was the first major policy statement in the legislature from the Conservative government and reflected Cabinet views on the future of child care services in Ontario. The Paper contained a
number of statements regarding the government's role in the provision of child care services -- as noted earlier, this very issue may be a reason child care services have failed to progress in Ontario. Birch's Paper also proposed a number of changes in the regulations under the Day Nurseries Act to reduce required staff-child ratios, staff qualifications, and other requirements. Furthermore, what became clear was the vision of the Progressive Conservative Party regarding child care: it envisioned the expansion of home day care programs rather than regulated group care. In response to questions raised in the legislature, the expansion of home care was cited as the future of child care:

We're also, of course, encouraging the development of more and more home day care, because we feel that a very positive way to provide day care for children in their own neighbourhood, where they are not subjected to long trips by bus early in the morning and again in the evening. We're attempting to encourage the development of that particular kind of day care across the province and there's a tremendous, positive response to this. (Hansard, 1975, p. 813)

Child care advocates viewed the recommendations made by Birch as a direct affront on the quality of child care in Ontario and a regressive rather than progressive move. Once again, this proposal also demonstrated an ideological position within the Conservative Party that less government involvement in family matters was best. Home-based child care allowed the government to have a response to a problem, with very little government intervention.

While extensive protests led to the withdrawal of the planned changes, the document is of particular importance because it did reflect the government's philosophy and policy positions which characterized the PC party for several years. Contained in the Birch paper were statements about what the government should do as well as what the government should not do. In the area of "should do," the White Paper proposed that day
care funding was to be made available "for those with the greatest social and financial need." In the 1981 background paper it was noted that:

Day nursery service for low-income families has been articulated as a Ministry objective for many years. The development of the subsidy program and the provision of capital funding to expand municipal centres and band-operated centres have made explicit the policy decision that low-income families would receive priority in the allocation of public resources to facilitate access to day nursery services. However, the Ministry has delegated to local government the function of precisely defining the purposes to be served in facilitating access for low-income families. Since municipalities determine who shall be eligible for and receive the benefit of provincial and municipal funds, the actual uses of funds vary. (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 16)

The statement goes on to identify several uses for child care, all of which focus on helping low-income families join the work force. There is no mention or recognition of the child care needs of middle-income families in Ontario.

This document was released by the Conservative government and is therefore seen as party policy. The Conservatives believed that child care was part of the spectrum of welfare services offered to low-income families, further entrenching child care services in the "welfare" sphere despite the increasing need of the services and financial assistance by middle income families. The Conservatives did try to recognize the unique needs of families with handicapped children and Native children in terms of providing some financial support. According to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, "specific resources were necessary, and (that) parents had to learn to deal in more sophisticated ways with handicapped children" (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 22). It may be suggested that this recognition, with its sensitivity to child development and the needs of families, was the beginning of a broader understanding of the impact of child care on child development.
A review of Hansard also suggests that the Conservatives had reservations about women with family responsibilities entering the workforce in any capacity. In response to a question the Honourable James Taylor, Minister of Community and Social Services in the mid-1970s, stated:

May I reinforce the views that I have expressed only so often, that I believe strongly that wherever possible we should try and keep a family together, and not to tear it apart. I don't think government should be instrumental in terms of tugging at families. It should ensure that family responsibilities, as much as possible, be discharged by families. (Hansard, 1976, p. 616)

The preceding statement also suggests that in the opinion of this particular Minister, and therefore in the opinion of the Conservative government, child care, with women working, had a negative affect on families and should be discouraged.

What was also clear in terms of the Conservative philosophy regarding child care, and continues to be the case, is that the concept of a universal child care system across Ontario was not to be part of the Conservative vision for child care in Ontario. Such a system, according to Birch, was “...unnecessary government interference in decisions that ought properly to be left to families themselves” (Kyle et al., 1991, p. 373). While some movement was seen in terms of recognizing the preventative role that child care played, such programs and policies were always done in connection with low-income families.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services regarded child care in the following five ways:

1) a “welfare” service, or a form of social assistance for low-income families
2) a service to working parents
3) a service to enhance the development of very young children
4) a child welfare service, intended to help children “at risk” by alleviating current familial distress or by preventing later problems in children
5) a service for handicapped children. (Ministry of Community and Social services, 1981, p. 15)
This notion of a welfare service was further articulated in the Ministry's principles guiding policy: "Public resources should be directed first to those in the greatest social and financial need." (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 58). This targeting of services was described by the Ministry as the "cornerstone" of the federal cost-sharing policy and day care policy of all other Canadian provinces. This type of positioning about the access to government support for some social services effectively eliminated any discussion regarding universal child care in Ontario. This was confirmed in the Ministry's statement of long-term priorities:

1) Gradual expansion of the number of subsidized spaces available to children of low-income families, with particular emphasis to be given to purchase-of-service programs where feasible expansion of service for handicapped children in integrated programs;

2) Implementation of a number of administrative reforms, intended to ensure that provincial resources are directed to those in the greatest need, including:
   a) municipal fee-charging policies based on the use of actual service costs
   b) mandatory use of Form 7 and provincial needs-testing guidelines where parents do not pay actual costs:
   c) streamlining of needs-testing procedures
   d) support for approaches to the enhancement of informal care
   e) effectiveness during the pilot project period the undertaking of specific initiatives; and

3) Ensure that day nursery programs can be appropriately utilized as non-residential resource for children with demonstrated special needs. (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 65)

Birch also espoused, on behalf of her caucus, the view that training relevant to the field of early childhood education was not important. At that time, the importance of training on quality was not known. Further, ratios contained in the Day Nurseries Act (1984) were too small and did not assure quality:

We believe that the present child-to-staff ratios...are unnecessarily small, that they add far more to the cost of these programs than they bring in tangible benefit.
Because these ratios have been too small, we can make modest changes in them, realizing significant reductions in the cost per child. (Kyle et al., 1991, p. 374)

The lobby against Birch and her government's proposals advocated for affordable, accessible child care that was characterized by the goal of quality care provided by trained professionals in licensed settings. The government, in response to the protests, appointed an Advisory Council on Day Care. The Council presented its first report in January 1975. It proposed three objectives for day care services:

Day Care must be considered in the total perspective... in the context of:

1) A service for children -- safe, healthy, developmental, enriching, nurturing, preventive;

2) A service for families -- support for parents needing surrogate child care for any one of a variety of reasons;

3) A community service -- one of a network of services to families and children, interrelated and enhancing the general welfare of the community (Ontario Advisory Council on Day Care, January, 1975, p. 2)

A second progress report, released in June 1975, made numerous recommendations regarding the maintaining of existing ratios, the need for all staff in centres to be trained, and the registration of private home day care organizations with the provincial government.

The final report set out a summary of principles that emphasized quality child care services for all children in environments required to meet standards that would ensure the quality of care and the provision of resources to those families in need. The report was also one of the first to stress a preventative role for child care services in Ontario. The majority of Birch's recommendations were, by this time, abandoned.
In 1978, after a formal consultation process run by the government based on the recommendations of the Advisory Council, the Day Nurseries Act was amended to include the following provisions:

1) a requirement that private-home day care agencies be licensed;
2) clarification of staff-child ratios;
3) support for integrating handicapped children into regular day care programs; and
4) funding for in-home services to the handicapped.

What also became apparent soon after was the struggle that governments still face today: To understand the role of government in providing child care services. In response to a question in the legislature, the Honourable Mr. Keith Norton, then Minister of Community and Social Services, stated the following:

The problem we will always have as legislators is determining what the most equitable way is to deal, not only with services like day care but services generally, which require extraordinary commitments in some instances of funds from taxpayers of the province in order to provide needed and necessary subsidies to service to other individuals. (Hansard, 1978, pp. 3753-3754)

In 1980 yet another consultation paper was released by the government Day Nurseries Services: Proposed Standards and Guidelines (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1980), which examined a number of new standards and guidelines which were approved and implemented in 1983. Between 1980 and 1983 the Ministry of Community and Social Services also released a policy background paper, Day Care Policy: Background Paper (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981), which looked at several objectives of child care services in Ontario. As noted earlier, the primary focus for child care, according to this document, was that of a child welfare service for low-income families.
The burden of the matter was that the child care community was already meeting many of these objectives. Child care was ready to move forward to a more accessible and affordable system, but as remarked upon by Kyle et al. (1991), the PC government was unwilling to move forward since a move forward to a more comprehensive approach to child care would require increases in funding. Once again there was the appearance of progress, but insufficient support to lead to any real changes.

The Background Paper of 1980 also identified six principles. These principles were to guide the work of the Ministry and serve as a template for the appropriate use of public resources:

1) endorsed a child development emphasis and the provision of quality care.
2) encouraged a diversity of service sponsorships and program philosophies.
3) supported parent education.
4) reaffirmed the role of municipalities and community agencies in planning and developing services.
5) directed public funding to families in social and financial need.
6) stressed the need for more equity in the distribution of day care programs and resources. (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1981, p. 81)

In response to these six principles, the PC government established the Day Care Initiatives Fund. This initiative was intended to expand licensed group and private-home day care and increase the number of subsidies available to low-income families. In addition, a joint service planning approach for day care between the Ministry and the two largest Ontario municipalities, Metropolitan Toronto and Ottawa-Carleton, were established.

Once again, the actions appeared to reflect a supportive view of child care from the government. However, the activities of the joint planning body were often impeded by the province's unwillingness to provide multi-year funding. Ultimately, the
government did provide some funding that was to be used to develop support services for both providers of informal care and parents. These supports were developed locally. As noted by Kyle et al. (1991), while this approach was an important change, politically it was seen as a means whereby the costs associated with expanding and maintaining licensed day care could be avoided. These initiatives also reflected the views espoused by Birch nearly a decade earlier that the informal sector could adequately fill the need for child care without any consideration for quality of care and the benefits of such care on child development. This view was endorsed again in 1982 when the Ministry of Community and Social Services introduced the Employment Support Initiatives (ESI). This program was intended to assist sole-support parents on social assistance to prepare to return to work or to seem employment. What was unique was that for the first time, a PC government recognized that assistance with child care was needed if training programs were to be effective. Parents were encouraged to use the informal sector and were reimbursed for their costs. This government direction raised many questions about quality, accountability, and the use of public money for unlicensed care.

In 1984, just before the end of Conservative rule in Ontario, the Ontario Standing Committee on Social Development (1985) was asked “to consider the principle and terms of the Day Nurseries Act” and to make recommendations to the Minister of Community and Social. This was in response to concerns raised by the Ontario Coalition for Better Day Care and other advocates about the omission of day nursery programs from the proposed Child and Family Services Act. The committee held public hearings across the province in September 1984. Once again, in theory, on paper, the Committee, dominated by Conservative government members, recognized the need for substantially more child
care facilities across the province and also acknowledged that the provision of child care is closely associated with “the rights of women to attain full and equal employment opportunities” (Ontario Standing Committee on Social Development, 1985, p. 4). However, due to pressure from the Minister of Community and Social Services and other government members, the question of jurisdiction was not addressed even though many committee members had been convinced of the need for significant change during the course of the hearings (Kyle et al., 1991).

As the PC government headed into the next election, child care moved to the forefront of election platforms. In March 1985, the Conservatives promised more than $50 million in a program they called Enterprise Ontario. This pre-election package included $30 million for 7,500 additional full time subsidized spaces over two years and $22 million to fund six Child Care Initiatives projects as part of a larger strategy to ensure job creation and support job training. Soon after this pre-election announcement, the Liberals defeated the Conservatives.

From 1985 to 1995 the Conservatives assumed their place as the third party in the legislature with the fewest number of elected seats. While in opposition, the PCs maintained their views regarding child care, although little was actually said in the 1990 election regarding child care. In 1992 the Standing Committee on General Government reviewed the NDP government's policy regarding to limit the role of the private sector. The final report, entitled Report on the Impact on Women of the Government's Conversion Policy Relating to Child Care, contained a Conservative dissent to the main report. The dissenting report recommended that:

1) private and non-profit centres be treated equally by the government;
2) the policy of building non-profit child care centres in new schools be reviewed;

3) new fee subsidies be available to parents who use private day care;

4) that capital funds for new child care spaces be frozen;

5) needs assessments be required for new non-profit centres; and

6) the government explore other child care funding mechanisms, such as cash allowances and tax credits, among other recommendations.

Once again, the emphasis on the private sector and the lack of concern regarding quality of care were evident in the Conservative report.

In 1994, the Conservatives released the *Common Sense Revolution* that said a Conservative government would support “free choice in child care” in contrast to the “nationalization” policies of the current government. The only substantial policy statement in the document states on this point:

> By ending the NDP’s efforts to nationalize all child care operations, we will open more options of parents to choose the kind of care they want for their children. This will encourage more centres to open, allowing more single parents to find the daycare spaces they need while working. (Conservative Party of Ontario, 1994, p. 15)

Both the Liberals and child care advocates saw this statement as an affront on non-profit child care and a gateway for the profit sector into child care services. The “problem” with the above statement was its failure to address the affordability concern faced by families today. By increasing profit sector involvement, the cost of child care would not be likely to drop, nor would new centres open.

The election document goes on to specify that should they be elected, the Conservatives would institute mandatory workfare. What is not addressed is that such a
program would create an even greater demand for affordable child care. The document does not contain any spending commitments for child care or the expansion of the existing system. This absence suggests a lack of recognition of the economic relationship between the ability of parents to work and the need for child care. Child care advocates were further outraged when Leader Mike Harris said those on welfare could alleviate the child care crisis by providing private home care. In response to reporters' questions about the increased need for child care under a mandatory workfare program, he stated, "In some cases, those who are currently collecting benefits, looking after one or two children at home, could look after one or two more children" (Toronto Star, 1995, p. A16). In the eyes of child care advocates, this not only showed a lack of commitment to licensed group care, but a disregard for the positive impact of child care on the development of children due to well trained staff.

On June 8, 1995 the Conservatives were elected with a majority government. Soon after, they began to implement their election platform, which led to substantial cuts to government funded programs and services. On July 21, 1995 the new Conservative government released the Ontario Fiscal Overview and Spending Cuts (Ontario, 1995). In the area of child care, it announced that 14,000 spaces previously funded 100% by the province were to be cost shared effective October 1, 1995:

Effective October 1 the 14,000 child care spaces created under JobsOntario Training will be funded by the Province and municipalities under the regular 80-20 cost-sharing formula. (Ontario, 1995, p. 3)

In addition, the statement also included spending reductions of 7.5 % over the next two years for Community and Social Service agencies, many of which provided support to families and young children. For the child care community, fear set in that the progress
made during the past decade would be erased. Advocacy groups organized various lobby
efforts to alter the governments’ direction. In a letter to the Prime Minister of Canada,
the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care declared:

Recently, the Ontario government has embarked on a course that will have a
profound impact on child care. Indeed, it not only will exact a heavy toll from
children and families but we think it signals the beginning of the end of the child
care system that has evolved in Ontario.

...It is now widely acknowledged that high quality, accessible child care must be
part of the infrastructure of a modern, forward- looking society. All of us
benefit from high quality, accessible child care because it furthers multiple goals
-- healthy child development, parental employment and training, alleviation of
poverty, and women's equality. (Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, 1995, p.
1)

In addition, the July 21, 1995 statement also indicated the Conservative government’s
intent to undertake a complete examination of the “child care system as a whole,
including wage subsidies, to ensure that taxpayers’ dollars are spent in the most effective
way” (Ontario, 1995, p. 3).

More than a year later, in September, 1996 the Conservative government released
its awaited review of child care. Based on a brief consultation, the review recommended
less government intervention, more use of informal care, and reduction of staff wage
subsidies. In many ways, the Janet Ecker paper on child care reflected the views of
Margaret Birch and was received with much outcry in certain circles. Driven by an
ideology consistent with its records, the Conservative government paper presented a
vision for child care that had less government involvement and greater family
responsibility based on the targeting of assistance only to those in the greatest financial
need. It also failed to address the research supporting the importance of the early years
and the experience of those years on a child’s future development. The child care
community described itself as outraged but has found any lobbying efforts to be of little consequence.

**Variables Influencing the Progressive Conservative View of Child Care**

The semi-scheduled interview format allowed the researcher to probe into the perceptions about how the variables influenced political parties and their stance on child care. Overwhelmingly, respondents noted that in the case of the Conservative government the single most influential variable was that of political ideology. This became most evident during an interview with a former Conservative Minister (the only individual who asked his identity be kept anonymous). In view of the earlier discussion about ideology as a reflection of values and beliefs, this individual felt strongly that for most Conservatives, family responsibilities were not a state concern. When asked about the influence of other variables such as economics, media, or public opinion, this individual expressed the view that the majority of the public agreed with his opinion. He noted that when he was Minister, he never heard from parents wanting more support for child care -- he only heard from advocacy groups. In his mind, these groups did not reflect the view of the majority. When asked about the high cost associated with child care, he felt strongly that such issues had to be explored before a couple chose to have a family. It became increasingly clear that the other variables had no impact on the view he held. This confirms the analysis of Dyck’s (1983) of Conservatism as an ideology that promotes individualism and inequality. Similarly, the notion that families need to assess their capacity to financially support a child, or children, reflects Dyck’s (1983) description of Conservatism as an ideology that tries to liberate the individual from the
restrictions of the state. A reduction in the role of the state and a market driven system, which may lead to inequalities, is, according to Dyck's (1983) analysis, the Conservative way.

While only one former Conservative minister agreed to be interviewed, the material reviewed in the history of the Conservative position, does appear to be consistent with this view. Based on this, it can be suggested that within the conceptual framework, ideology, as a variable, most significantly influenced the approach to child care taken by at least one key actor at one point for the Progressive Conservative Party in Ontario. Other variables such as public opinion, media coverage, or advocacy groups, appeared to have only swayed the government when events occurred close to elections.

This view of the State’s role within family responsibility is still evident today. In a recent document, Reinvestment Strategy for Children and Youth, (1997), the Ministry of Community and Social Services, under the direction of a Conservative government, presented a view of access to services that targeted government support to those in greatest need and assumed others would find the means to meet their needs.

The Liberals and Child Care

Prior to the 1960s, there appear to be no references to child care policy in Liberal materials available to the public. Mention of child care was raised and recorded for the first time in 1969 at a Liberal Policy Conference, at which the Conservative government was accused of neglecting day care; this concern was justified by reference to statistics demonstrating that most working mothers had to supplement low family incomes. By 1971, the Liberal platform advocated that the provincial government cover 80% of capital
costs, that fees be paid on a sliding scale based on parental income, and that the
regulations governing licensed care be made more flexible, so that community groups
would be able to set up licensed facilities (the regulations did not permit this flexibility at
the time). Before long, the Conservative government, in fact, adopted many of these
policies. By 1975, the Liberal party focused its questions and recommendations on the
recommendations of the Advisory Council that Margaret Birch had established.
Questions in the legislature focused on the Conservative government's commitment to
recommendations.

Examples of such questions included questions from Margaret Campbell, the
Liberal member for the riding of St. George, who focused on issues such as the need for
trained staff to ensure quality of care in licensed centres (Hansard, 1975, p. 1165). Other
Liberal members who asked questions in the legislature included Stuart Smith, Liberal
member for Nipissing who tried to better understand the government's commitment to the
improved training of child care staff (Hansard, 1975, p. 881). By 1976, John Sweeney,
the aforementioned Director of Education, had entered politics and had become a vocal
advocate of child care. At this time the government had still not acted on the
recommendations of the Advisory Committee and had, according to Sweeney, cut back
its financial commitment. In asking the question of the government in the House, John
Sweeney -- on behalf of the Liberals -- acknowledged the link between child care and
ability of parents to join the workforce:

Is the Minister aware that because of the decision to cut back on daycare support,
another policy of the Ministry -- that is, to have single-parent mothers out
working, if possible -- has been curtailed in the Waterloo region? It is my
understanding that a saving in the neighbourhood of $120,000 could be achieved
if the welfare director had sufficient daycare facilities to look after the children of these single-parent mothers who want to go to work. (Hansard, 1976, pp. 2081)

Rooted in their ideological view that fairness within a competitive society was crucial, the Liberals’ position that began to evolve appeared to be influenced not only by this ideology, but also by the recognition of a changing society as more and more women entered the workforce. These views were also heard in committees of the legislature. In 1980, during the hearings of the Standing Committee on Social Development (which at the time was reviewing the Estimates of the Ministry of Community and Social Services) Sweeney, again on behalf of the Liberals, raised concerns regarding the accessibility and affordability of child care services for working families. During the proceedings, Sweeney noted that at that time the government provided subsidised spaces to only 7% of pre-school children with working families (Hansard, 1980, p. s-1029). Based on the comments of Sweeney, it was evident once again that the Liberal view at the time was that child care was an economic necessity to working families trying to stay above the poverty levels.

The Liberal commitment to the expansion of child care was seen throughout the early 1980s. Members such as Sheila Copps, Sean Conway, Don Boudria, and William Wrye continued to raise the child care issue. The focus of most questions was the accessibility and affordability of the service for working parents and the perceived lack of commitment from the Conservative government to help working families.

In 1985, with the defeat of the Conservative Party, the Liberals took office with a minority government. In the 1985 election platform, the Liberals had three specific references to child care:
1) that access to or provision of child care would be one factor in rewarding provincial contracts to companies;

2) that a Workplace Child Care Initiative Fund would be established; and

3) that a Liberal government would guarantee access to child care for all children eligible for subsidy, a need estimated at 10,000 spaces.

The election of a minority government also led to the well-known Liberal/NDP Accord (1985). The Accord identified areas that both the Liberals and New Democrats were committed to in a similar way. Child care was one of the most significant components of the Accord. Document 3 of the Accord identified a number of “common campaign proposals, to be implemented within a framework of fiscal responsibility” (Ontario, 1985, p.4). Contained in this list was the following commitment to child care: “Reform of day care policy and funding to recognize child care as a basic public service and not a form of welfare” (Ontario, 1985, p.4).

The first budget presented by the Liberals in October 1985 reaffirmed campaign commitments and the commitment contained in the Accord. The Liberal government announced it would fund 10,000 child care subsidies, with priority given to rural and under-serviced areas, and to children with special needs. In the 1986 Budget, the Treasurer called child care “a basic public service” (a formulation used in the 1985 Accord with the NDP), and provided money for capital expansion in addition to expanded services already announced that year. The Accord, as signed by both parties, stated that reform of the system should “recognize child care as a basic public service and not a form of welfare.”

It is important to note that the Liberal government did not achieve this goal. In 1986 the Liberal government also asked its Select Committee on Health to consider the
question of whether or not commercial day care programs should continue to receive public funding. The Committee's report noted that “...commercial activity within the child care sector is significant and has played an important role for some time.” The report went on to note that the “...mix of municipal, non-profit and commercial operators in Ontario warranted further examination” (Ontario Select Committee on Health, 1987, p. 7). The report further stated on to make additional recommendations for greater accountability for funding, and more rigorous inspection and monitoring systems. The New Democratic Party members presented a dissenting opinion, with considerable opposition to the Committee recommendation (endorsed by the Liberal government) -- that commercial and non-profit child services be provided with operating grants.

The commitment from the Liberal government to the expansion of child care continued. The recognition of child care as an economic support for families was often echoed in their policy statements. The Throne Speech of April 28, 1987 was no exception:

The absence of an adequate supply of quality, affordable child care may be the single greatest obstacle preventing many families from realizing their full economic potential...government is aware of the need for immediate action at the provincial level...we will introduce a comprehensive policy that recognizes child care as a basic public service, not a welfare service. (Ontario, Throne Speech, 1987)

Following the Throne Speech, 1987, the Liberal government released New Directions for Child Care, in June 1987. The major policy priorities of this document were:

1) expansion of the non-profit child care sector (this included an initiative to provide direct grants to improve salaries of child care staff and capital assistance to non-profits only);
2) requiring child care spaces in all new schools;
4) expansion of subsidies and shift to income-testing for eligibility for subsidies;
5) funding for pilot projects addressing shift workers, integration of special-needs children, and needs in rural areas; and
6) the introduction of a Child Care Act.

The announcement was to guide a three-year planning cycle with $26 million in the 1987 budget year and an overall increase of $165 million over the balance of the 3-year period, to a total of $325 million (this includes federal and municipal contributions) (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1987, p. 1). This cycle would be completed in 1990.

One of the significant features of the Liberal position on child care reflected in New Directions was what appeared to be a movement away from the Conservative view that child care was a welfare service. Child care was now being seen by the Liberal government as an economic support for families and, in particular for mothers wishing to enter the workforce. In addition, the Liberal government was able to not only make commitments to the expansion of the child care system, but provide the funding needed to meet those commitments. Even in the late 1990s, many of the Liberal initiatives are seen to have had a lasting effect on child care in Ontario. In addition, the Liberals recognized the need for employers to provide “family friendly” environments – although this translated into little action if any.

In the 1990 election, the Ontario Liberals promised to continue with expansion of the child care system in Ontario with a second three-year cycle that would see increased access, more subsidized spaces, and the expansion of the non-profit sector. Internal analysts attributed the defeat to issues such as the Liberal’s policy to reduce government contributions to the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan and controversy surrounding the newly built Dome stadium. Subsequently, they formed the new Official Opposition.
As the Official Opposition, the Liberals initiated a review of the NDP government policy regarding the role of the profit sector. The Liberals agreed with the expansion of the non-profit sector. In essence, they felt that over time, the profit sector would be reduced through natural attrition since it did not receive the kind of financial support provided to the non-profit sector. However, the NDP policy went further by restricting new fee subsidy spaces to the non-profit sector only and by providing additional funding for staff wages to the non-profit sector only. The NDP also set up a conversion fund for the private sector and openly encouraged conversion as the preferable alternative to losing one's business completely. While the Liberals supported the expansion of the not-for-profit sector, the conversion package was viewed by the Liberals as too aggressive because of the impact on women working in the centres and families using the centres. The Liberal caucus saw such radical action as unnecessary. As a result, the Liberals requested the Standing Committee on General Government review the impact of the policy on women. In the 1992 report, Report on the Impact on Women of the Government's Conversion Policy Relating to Child Care, the Liberals presented a dissenting report that made a set of recommendations regarding the money allocated to conversion:

1) that money for conversion of private centres to non-profit-centres should instead be spent on fee subsidies and wage enhancements for workers in all centres;
2) that parents should be able to choose for profit-care and receive subsidies; and
3) that the money enhance the enforcement of existing access to child care for all families who wish it; and
4) that funding patterns should reflect new growth in the system within the non-profit sector and should continue.
The NDP initiative allocated $72 million to conversion, which the Liberals believed would have supported thousands of subsidized spaces across the province.

In the 1995 election platform, the Liberals presented an entire chapter devoted to families and children. On the issue of child care, several commitments were made including: expansion of the number of spaces; joint projects with the federal government who had been offering Ontario over $30 million to Ontario over a period of three years (but for political reasons the NDP was not responding to the offer); a new eligibility system to increase access to middle class families; a tax credit for those families with one individual earning $50,000 on condition that no other subsidies were being received by the family; a move to the hub model for all children's services to make access easier for families; and the naming of a key minister, either the Minister of Health, Education, or Community and Social Services who would be responsible for co-ordination of children's services. The perception from within the party (this is an internal analysis based on the researcher's experience and discussions while still employed by the Liberal Caucus) after the election was that the criticism of the Liberal platform centred on the Party’s efforts to please all parts of society. At a time when Ontario’s finances were in a state of disarray, many felt the priority for any government had to be the reduction of government expenditure. Any discussion about expansion of services was therefore seen as an additional expense taxpayers were unwilling to accept. The Liberals were again defeated in the 1995 election and once again formed the Official Opposition.
Variables Influencing the Liberal View of Child Care

Because of the researcher’s close connection to the Ontario Liberal Party, a greater number of former Liberal Ministers of Community and Social Services were willing to be interviewed. Again, using probing techniques during the interview, respondents were asked about those variables influencing the presence of child care on the political agenda. In all cases, respondents identified a number of variables including public opinion, economics, and research as the most influential. In contrast to the Progressive Conservative view, ideology was not mentioned within the Liberal view. All Liberals interviewed saw early childhood education as an “equalizer” for many children. Furthermore, all identified current research pointing to the importance of the early years and the impact of the experiences had by a child during those years as critical. John Sweeney noted that access to care was, for most families, not a problem. Most could find neighbours or relatives. But access to care that offered the child experiences that met, challenged, and reflected developmental needs was more difficult. Although there are two streams of Liberals (Dyck, 1983), business Liberals and welfare Liberals, historians agree that the Liberal Party made an ideological shift around 1919 from a business Liberal to a welfare Liberal orientation. Manzer (1985) describes this stream of liberalism as one that preserves the notion of a traditional competitive capitalist market society and adds an element of protection for the oppressed. Within this paradigm, Liberals, as seen in the examination of the child care policy in Ontario, view the state as a positive agent in liberating individuals from the constraints of other forces, including the private enterprise economy. This elaborates on the view of many liberals that quality
early childhood education can act as an “equalizer” that increases the likelihood of equal opportunity later in life.

During the interview with the Liberal respondents, the researcher also asked what variables were seen to most influence the position of the other two parties on this issue. Again, consistently, all stated that in the case of the Conservatives, ideology influenced the agenda. In the case of the NDP, ideology, public opinion, and economics were identified as most influential.

The New Democratic Party

Some might suggest that on the issue of child care, the NDP is the most progressive since it was the first party to recognize the issue of child care as an important one. In 1944, the provincial party's election platform advocated a “comprehensive scheme of child care and nursery schools.” However, child care was not specifically mentioned in major national policy platforms in 1956 or 1961, nor in the provincial Party platforms, both called Programs for Ontario, in 1962 and 1967. In 1971, however, a section of the Party referred to as The Waffle, made the issue part of its feminist agenda, and the provincial Party platform advocated funding community-run day care, especially in low-income areas. As noted in the section detailing the Conservatives, this funding was provided in 1974 by the Conservative government.

Throughout its time in opposition, the NDP was the Party to raise the issue of child care most often in the legislature. In 1975, the Party’s policy literature advocated that: day care be available and accessible; a range of services, including care in private homes, be available to any family with a need for child care; that day care workers be
better paid; and standards be enshrined in regulations be treated as minimum standards of care. In 1983, the Party recommended a fully funded system of child care for all that need it. In 1985, the Party position was almost identical to that formulated in 1975.

In 1985 a provincial election resulted in a Liberal minority government. This led to the signing of the Accord between the Liberals and NDP. It declared that reform of the system should “recognize child care as a basic public service and not a form of welfare.” Despite its efforts, the NDP was unable to achieve many of the policy changes for child care that were desired due to increasing concern from within government and the electorate about the economy.

In 1987, the NDP presented a dissenting report response to the Select Committee on Health. The Dissenting Opinion from the New Democratic members took account of the considerable opposition to the government proposal to provide operating grants to both commercial and non-profit child care services. NDP dissenters also reflected the position of child care advocates, vis-à-vis., “...profit-making has no place in the care of young children” (p. 72). In that same year the NDP also presented a private member’s resolution that recommended that the government cease to provide public funds to for-profit providers.

In the 1990 election campaign, the NDP policy document, The Agenda for People, promised an increase in the number of subsidized child care spaces with a move toward a more “universal” child care system. Aside from this promise, no new commitments were made, although according to traditional NDP policy it was understood that party positions taken in the past regarding the direction of child care would be the policy direction under a NDP government.
Another provincial election in 1990 led to a majority NDP government. Child care advocates clearly felt that child care reform would be achieved through an NDP government. Upon their election the new government made a commitment to fund child care reform. As a first step towards reform, the NDP government announced the wage enhancement grant for child care staff in non-profit centres. This grant would enhance the Direct Operating Grant introduced by the former Liberal government. In addition, it was the creation of a special fund to convert profit centres to non-profit centres was announced. At the time it was also announced that: as of January 1, 1992, new fee subsidies would go to non-profit centres only, unless municipalities could show that non-profit spaces were unavailable; the government would license new for-profit centres only if their business plans were not reliant on government funding; and parents' access to information on for-profit centres would be improved. It was this announcement that initiated the Liberal request to review the impact of the government's conversion policy on women. As noted earlier, both the Liberals and Conservatives presented dissenting reports.

In 1992, the NDP government also launched consultation for a major child care reform process. A number of observers perceived that the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care was working with the government on this initiative. The Coalition confirmed that in fact, they assisted in writing the document. The reform document, Setting the Stage, called for a new management structure for child care administered by the province. Under the reform, the role of municipalities would be reduced significantly with the province dealing more directly with centres. Based on the reform consultation, two separate proposals were presented to the NDP Cabinet.
The first Cabinet Submission (1993) contained a number of principles for child care and reaffirmed the NDP government’s commitment to address major policy questions and new legislation. This submission “was an effort to resolve fundamental policy questions on child care reform related to jurisdiction, system management, finance, and timing of new legislation” (Ontario, 1993, p. 1) all based on the public feedback received during consultations and the severe fiscal pressures. The following are some of the key recommendations:

1) MCSS and MoEd be directed to fully develop the costings, policy and implementation implications of establishing an Early Childhood Authority responsible for the implementation of child care and early education reform, and return to Cabinet in three months;

2) The Ministry of Education be directed to proceed immediately to review the Education Act, with the purpose of allowing school boards to hold the licence to operate regulated, non-profit child care services within their catchment areas, and that, following policy approval, appropriate amendments to the Education Act be tabled by spring 1993;

3) Cabinet direct MCSS and MoEd to work with the Ministries of Tourism and Recreation, Housing, and the Ontario Women's directorate to develop program and funding guidelines, and identify potential funding for care/recreation programs for older school-aged children which will;

   a) be cost effective for both government and parents;
   b) result in high quality services, incorporating the best aspects of both child care and recreation activities; and
   c) be developed as part of the local child care service plan which would reflect an integrated approach to service delivery;

4) Cabinet approve in principle the introduction of a strong provincial accountability framework;

5) Financial reform that would provide core funding to all centres, the recognition of true costs for services; and

6) A reformed role for municipalities in the new management system for child care. (Cabinet, 1993, p. 13)
At the Cabinet meeting, it was confirmed that child care reform had two basic components:

1) stabilization and reform of child care financing; and

2) a new vision of an early years program for young children.

According to a second unpublished document submitted to Policy and Priorities Board (February, 1994), it was agreed that child care reform should proceed and that it was to be funded as much as possible by transferring unspent funds from the jobsOntario Training program’s child care fee subsidies. The second document contained specific reference to an announcement on the new vision for child care and more detail regarding the financial aspect of child care reform. According to the second document that Cabinet approved, a non-targeted child care system with access to service to be based on a first come, first served basis was to be designed. All non-profit programs were to receive 100% funding for their approved operating budgets through program funding and parent fees, with such fees were based on ability to pay. The document also pointed out that should child care reform not proceed, child care would remain a welfare service and unaffordable for most families.

While the Cabinet document reflected a true commitment to child care reform from the NDP government, it also considered the consequence of not implementing their plan:

From a communications perspective, one of the results of the consultation process has been to create very high expectations among some public interest groups about the government's intentions for child care reform. Among the general public, however, those expectations do not exist. Focus groups conducted in August indicate that, for the most part, the general public is not aware of the government's stated intention to reform the child care system. In fact, the focus group respondents were somewhat surprised that the government is considering
child care reform in the face of its problems with the provincial deficit. (Ontario, 1994, p. 15)

After presentation of this plan to Cabinet, little was heard publicly about the proposal. It was later revealed through inside sources that the NDP government was becoming increasingly concerned with the growing financial crisis facing the province. As a result, Westmount Research Consultants Inc. was hired to conduct some polling on the child care issue. In October, 1993, Westmount presented its findings revealing that public support for a reformed child care system with more government subsidy remained high: “After hearing a general description of the Early Years Program, 63% of respondents favour the program. Once informed of all the details of the Early Years Program, support for it increases to 73%” (Westmount, 1993, p. 11). The government soon made it clear to the child care community that due to financial circumstances it was unable to proceed with child care reforms. However, while unable to do many of the things they wanted under the child care umbrella, the NDP did provide a pay equity plan for child care that improved the wages of a largely female dominated field.

As the government headed into an election year, little was heard about the child care issue. Meetings with the business community appeared to dominate the activities of the government. In June of 1994 the Liberals initiated a Private Member's Resolution asking Members of Parliament to support in principle a self-regulating body for Early Childhood Educators. The profession itself was wanting this adoption and had invested in considerable research to determine support among its members. All three Parties agreed to the resolution. In 1996 Lyn McLeod, then Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party, introduced a Private Member's Bill to enable the creation of a College for Early
Childhood Educators. The Bill in fact passed but was sent to Committee of the Whole. This meant that it was up to the government to decide when to bring it forward for second reading. The bill has since fallen off the legislative calendar.

In 1994, the NDP government was presented with the report from the Royal Commission on Learning, *For the Love of Learning* (1994). The report led to considerable controversy over one of the key recommendations calling for the government to invest in early childhood education:

That Early Childhood Education (ECE) be provided by all school boards to all children from 3 to 5 years of age whose parents/guardians choose to enrol them. ECE would gradually replace existing junior and senior kindergarten programs, and become a part of the public education system. (December, 1994, p. 67)

In response to the recommendation, editorial cartoons, letters to the editor, and articles followed, the newspapers across the province decrying the idea that children in diapers were to be sent to school. This reaction appeared to give pause to the government. Rather than implementing the recommendation, the NDP government funded pilot projects which expanded junior and senior kindergarten. This represented a significant shift in how early childhood education was viewed – a move from the traditional social service to that of education.

Little else was heard from the NDP in this area prior to the 1995 election call. Child care did not appear to be a top priority on their election agenda. The NDP was defeated in 1995. In opposition, Frances Larkin became critic of children's services and continues to raise the child care issue in the legislature on a regular basis.
Variables Influencing the New Democratic Party View of Child Care

The NDP is traditionally viewed as a Party more sympathetic to the social perils of citizens. Ideologically, this group is most frequently aligned with the labour movement. Members do incorporate the Liberal view of creating a fair and level playing field, but appear to be more definitive in what will enable the creation of such a society. In an analysis of the three political parties, Dyck (1983) described the NDP as a Party seeking to liberate the individual from inequalities and exploitation of the capitalist system. This analysis appears to be confirmed by the actions of the NDP both while in government, but particularly while in opposition in Ontario.

When asked about influential variables, the two NDP members interviewed indicated that ideology would always be an influential variable. However, unlike any of the other politicians interviewed, the NDP respondents identified the number of women in Cabinet as a significant variable that had an impact on the success or failure of proposals on child care. Similar to the Liberals, the NDP identified economics as a variable which could not be ignored and often overpowered the influence of ideology.

Summary of Variables Influencing Political Views on Child Care

Among the three parties, the variables most commonly cited included ideology, economics, public opinion, media, research, and gender representation at Cabinet. Of these, political respondents most frequently reported ideology and economics. When others (civil servants, advocates) within the policy community were asked about influential variables, the above were noted with the addition of jurisdiction, personal experiences, and leadership skills of the Minister in charge. An analysis of variables
influencing the policy agenda, Anderson (1984) suggests that these findings are consistent with his theory. Anderson (1984) identified values, party affiliation (referred to as political ideology in this research), and public opinion as some of the key variables influencing agendas of political parties and government.

The review of archival material, theories of political ideology (Dyck, 1983; Manzer, 1985), and the responses from interviews suggests that in many ways, one might suggest that the Conservative view, or that of any political party, of the government role of child care will likely differ even twenty years from today. Similarly, the NDP view will always be influenced by an ideological commitment to a fair and equitable society. The Liberal view appears to be more fluid and is perhaps the most likely to change over the next decade in response to public opinion and economics.

As noted earlier all three parties have had impact on child care policies in Ontario as opposition parties and as governments. As opposition, impact appears to have been achieved through question period activities as well as legislative committees.
Chapter 8
Information: Presentation, Analysis and Commentary

Application of the Data

Within a qualitative research study, data are a collection of the thoughts and insights of individuals. Combined, these individual reflections can be used to formulate patterns, generate themes, and provide bases for conceptualization. This type of organization of data allows the researcher to identify similarities, differences, and insights into the phenomena that we strive to better understand. As part of this process, researchers may employ content analysis methods. Such methods allow the researcher to make “replaceable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21).

The data presented in this chapter cover the period from 1983 to 1996, a period during which each of the dominant political parties in Ontario was given a mandate to govern. As a result, a descriptive analysis of the evolution of child care policy as it exists today can be undertaken and will be presented. To assist in the interpretation of data, an explanation of terms used within the context of the data is undertaken below.

Categories of Data

This section will focus on each category of data identified by the researcher. In total four distinct data sources were used for the purpose of this study: (1) interview data; (2) provincial documents; (3) legislative Hansard; and (4) newspaper articles.
Provincial Documents

Two categories of provincial documents were reviewed: (1) published documents; and (2) unpublished documents (see Appendix I for list of published and unpublished documents). For the years 1983 through 1996, the researcher was able to obtain 11 provincial government documents. Unpublished documents included Ministerial briefing notes, Cabinet submissions, and polls specifically dealing with the government's child care policy direction. The published documents included reports from legislative committees and, commissioned reviews. Again, each addresses the issue of child care or early childhood education in a significant way.

An analysis of the documents allowed the researcher to not only gain perspective into the issues and solutions being considered by government, but also to develop a chronology of events that have led to child care policy as it exists today (see Table 1-2). Among the internal documents several observations could be made regarding the issues raised. One document suggests that while problems existed with the system, it would not be changed significantly, only modified slightly by improving existing features. The issues identified in the remaining documents included: (1) accessibility; (2) affordability; (3) quality; (4) early childhood education; (5) flexibility; and (6) improved co-ordination within the provincial government and among various levels of government. All documents clearly indicate a need to completely reform the existing child care system. Unpublished documents from the Liberal government identify several solutions to the child care issue. These range from additional financial resources, improved access and affordability, targeting of services to the neediest with the intention of reaching the middle class in later reforms, and improving quality through changes to the Day
Nurseries Act (1984). The NDP's unpublished documents also contain a general consensus of dissatisfaction with the existing system. Their solutions include a complete reform of the system to a more universally accessible and affordable system. They also project the province as assuming a greater role in the administration of the system. Philosophically, both parties expressed a desire to invest in early childhood education and understood the benefits of such an investment to the child and to society.

One unpublished document from the Conservative government was located and it reflects dissatisfaction with the existing system. However, its solutions vary significantly from those of the NDP and Liberals. The Conservatives appear to recognize the need for child care but argue that the private home sector would be able to meet the needs in a more affordable way. Little attention is given to the issue of quality and the impact it has on the service provided. In addition, the Conservatives still see child care as primarily a familial responsibility and therefore target subsidies to those in greatest need with no intention of addressing the impact of high child care costs on middle income families.

Published documents from the NDP and the Liberals all support a child care system more closely linked to the education system as well as a system that goes beyond the provision of care to a more educational experience for the child. According to the update on New Directions for Child Care (1989), the Liberal government the intent of this reform was:

...to expand access to child care, expand the fee subsidy assistance to families, introduce ongoing salary grants for child care staff and private home daycare providers, strengthen child care partnerships at all levels, develop and test new models of service, and to initiate a number of quality initiatives including new legislation, improved parent information and participation and development of a plan for the human resources and training needed to support the expanded systems. (1989, p.1)
The above passage suggests improvement of the existing system that will benefit children, parents, and staff. In a similar vein, the NDP Cabinet submission of 1993 made the following statement as the objective of reform:

Ultimately, the child care system will be more stable and responsive, accessible, affordable, and integrated with schools and related community services; this will directly benefit children and families, and will contribute towards the government's social and economic objectives (e.g., economic recovery and job creation, employment equity and gender equality, education reform, social assistance reform, introduction of a child benefit, etc). (1993, p. 1)

Similarly, both the NDP and Liberals acknowledged the need for a system that relied partially on parental fee contributions at a level that would ensure universal access. Documents also argue a need to move from a welfare system of child care to an educational system. Although their positions are similar, there was a partisan difference.

The NDP more clearly articulated the design of the system than the Liberals who outlined philosophical underpinnings of a new system, but did not translate these into the actual design. According to the NDP 1993 Cabinet Submission, child care would be under the jurisdiction of both the Ministry of Education and Community and Social Services:

MCSS and MoEd be directed to fully develop the costings, policy and implementation implications of establishing an Early Childhood Authority, responsible for the implementation of child care and early education reform, and return to Cabinet in three months....It is further recommended that, while the analysis of Option IV is undertaken, MCSS and MoEd proceed with the policy work outlined in Option II, required to strengthen the coordination and partnership between school and child care programs. (1993, p. 3)

Documents examined suggest a serious examination of the issue by each political party while in government. While solutions did differ, it is clear in the language of documents that each party had believed its solutions would lead to a more accessible system of child
care. For the Conservatives, access for the economically disadvantaged was the primary issue. For the Liberals, and the NDP, accessibility, affordability, and the quality of the experience were priorities.

**Interviews**

A total of 15 interviews were conducted between January 1997 and June 1997. The Table below illustrates the various roles of those individuals interviewed (see Appendix H). All respondents, except one, agreed to be identified for the purpose of this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8-1</th>
<th>Categories of Respondents Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Former/ Present Minister</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former/ Present Deputy Minister</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former/ Present Civil Servants</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the preceding Table, it can be seen that the diversity of respondents reflects the spectrum of individuals involved actively with the child care issue. While some categories of respondents contain a greater number, this can be attributed to the willingness of those approached to participate in the study. To obtain a spectrum of the views held by respondents towards the issue of child care, interviewees were asked to describe their vision of child care. Table 8-2 illustrates the different views held by respondents about child care.
Table 8-2
Frequency of Descriptions Used by Respondents to Describe Their Personal Vision of Child Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An accessible system</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An affordable system</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A place where children learn</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to, but not operated by schools</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A public service</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a healthy family policy</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A social support</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a strategy to eradicate poverty</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of the education system</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A system that offers parents choice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulated</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A system outside of the education system</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided by trained staff</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A continuum of services</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies given directly to parents</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More informal care</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A system that is safe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cost for business</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a Ministry of the Child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of an economic strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two most frequently described features of a child care system were accessibility and affordability. It was clear from 7 of 15 respondents that a system that is both accessible and affordable is important. Similarly, 7 of 15 respondents assert that a child care system should be linked to our education system and should also serve as an employment support. These findings are consistent with the analysis of internal and external government documents where the issue of accessibility is consistently raised by all three political parties. While some consensus is found on issues such as accessibility and affordability, the preceding table also illustrates the diversity of views about child care in Ontario. There is not a single factor that respondents overwhelmingly identify as a critical part of a child care system.

Respondents were also asked to share their perceptions about public attitudes towards child care. Table 8-3 shows that while some consensus exists on issues such as
accessibility and affordability, the preceding table also captures the diversity of views held by the public about child care in Ontario.

| Table 8-3 |
|------------------|------------------|
| **Frequency of Descriptions Used by Respondents to Describe Their Perception of Public Attitudes Towards Child Care** |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uninformed about the issue</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive of publicly funded child care</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An investment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers should be at home</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babysitting</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for working women</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxpayers should have to pay</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A social service for the poor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority issue</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood education</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficial for every child</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A centre-based system — stable</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A private matter</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehousing of children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A healthy child development initiative</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked to schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A market driven system</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacking in media appeal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although only 30% did so, respondents most frequently describe the public view on child care as uninformed. The diversity of perception about public views on the child care issue may speak to the difficulty in developing a consensus about what a publicly funded child care system should look like in Ontario. While a few respondents sense that the public viewed child care as an investment, an equal number feel that the public still believe mothers should be at home caring for their children or saw child care as a baby-sitting service only. A 1998 study by the Canadian Policy and Research Network came to similar conclusions (Peters, 1998).
**Respondent Response to the Proposed Framework**

Specifically, comments regarding the importance of variables, missing variables, or the sequence of events were probed. Overall response to the model from 14 of the 15 respondents interviewed was very positive. Those feeling positive saw the model as a very good illustration of the dynamics surrounding the agenda-setting process. The one respondent who was reluctant to give any positive comment felt the model was too simplistic and needed to be more ecological. By this, the respondent seemed to suggest a need to look and include more environmental factors than were reflected. Several felt that circles rather than boxes would capture the interaction of areas and consequent dynamics. Several individuals also expressed a need for the model to reflect an individual's

As the interviews moved into the issue of agenda-setting, respondents were asked to identify those factors or forces that influenced the agendas set by political parties and government. Table 8-4 provides a summary of the responses.
Table 8-4
Frequency of Change Agents and Forces Perceived by Respondents to be Influencing the Political Agenda-Setting Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Change/Agents</th>
<th>Labour movement</th>
<th>Women's movement</th>
<th>New Democratic Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public opinion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Interest/Advocacy Groups</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Ministers – their experiences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population demographics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions about women’s roles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 15 respondents interviewed, 13 felt that political ideology was the one of the factors that influenced the agendas of political government. Public opinion, economics, and special interest groups were the second most frequently identified variables and media the third. In each case, more than 60% of respondents identify the above as the variables influencing the agenda-setting process. Again, these findings are consistent with the content analysis of documents. Solutions vary among the three parties and differences could be linked to ideology. Thus, as demonstrated earlier, the Conservatives have always been seen to favour a more market-driven system while the NDP a more universally accessible system with the Liberals placing themselves in the middle of the two. Interviewees were then asked to identify the groups or individuals that they felt had been most active and influential in the child care debate. Table 8-5 provides a summary of the findings.
Table 8-5
Frequency of Key Players Identified by Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Early Childhood Educators</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro daycare advocates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Day Care Operators</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Action Committee</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Anti-Poverty Organization</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign 2000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkinson Foundation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Child Care Federation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Federation of Labour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparrow Lake Alliance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener Waterloo Child Care</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Home Day Care Federation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8-5 not only reflects the diversity of "key players" seen to be active in the child care movement, but also the diversity of opinion about which groups have been active. Consensus was however clearly found about the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care since nearly 100% of respondents identify this group as a key player. Again, the diversity of who or what organizations are active may contribute to the lack of consensus among politicians, advocates, and others as to the design of the child care system in Ontario. However, that the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is overwhelmingly seen as influential is consistent with the previous finding that interest and advocacy groups are seen as having a pivotal role in the agenda-setting process in Ontario.

Respondents were then asked to identify the obstacles or hurdles to a more universally accessible child care system in Ontario. Table 8-6 illustrates that economics, ideology, and public opinion are most frequently identified as obstacles and hurdles. If
these findings are applied to the time of the NDP government, the admission by that NDP government that it would be unable to move forward with child care reform due to economic pressures facing the province, is consistent with the interview results. Similarly, the Conservatives believe that less government and a more market-driven approach is the solution to the child care crisis, while universality is the pivotal for the NDP. Each position is deeply rooted in ideology.

| Table 8-6 |
| Frequency of Respondents Perceived Obstacles and Hurdles to a Publicly Funded Child Care System |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacle</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Opinion</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Service</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition with other programs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on debt and deficit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy groups</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uninformed public</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The term “child care”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of a “quality product”</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can see from the preceding Table that respondents clearly regard economics as the main obstacle to a publicly funded child care system. The second most frequently identified obstacle is that of ideology followed by public opinion. The diversity of obstacles may pose a challenge to advocacy groups as they try to better understand where to put the emphasis of any lobbying activities.

Interviewees were also asked about leadership within government and outside government on the child care issue. The majority of respondents depict leadership within government as having been inconsistent and depending largely on the individual Ministers, and the experiences they brought to the portfolio as well as their status within
Specifically, the majority of respondents refer to John Sweeney as a leader within government on child care issues. Respondents did not identify any other former Ministers as especially central. Similarly, outside of government, all respondents identified a lack of leadership. Many admitted that the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care had been most vocal on the child care issue during the past decade, but felt that the term “leadership” did not describe the Coalition’s work. Therefore, all respondents noted a deficit in leadership on child care outside of government.

Legislative Hansard

The third data source reviewed was legislative Hansard. A review and analysis of questions asked by each party between 1983 to 1996 was conducted. The total number of questions asked in the House by each party between 1983 and 1996 is illustrated in Table 8-7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Support More Gov’t Funds</th>
<th>Oppose More Gov’t Funds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Democrats</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the perception of the Conservatives being ideologically opposed to government-funded child care, they register as the provincial party most vocal on the child care issue
in the provincial legislature. Further analysis of their questions reveals that aside from one Conservative question, all questions from each political party focused on more funding for child care services. Questions consistently focused on the issue of accessibility and affordability for families across the province, demanding more government support for families in need of child care.

When analyzing the questions asked in the legislature, one should keep in mind that the Conservatives were in opposition for a significant portion of the time this study analyzed. As a result the fact that they asked more questions is logical since those in government do not have the same opportunity to ask questions.

Newspapers

In reviewing newspaper coverage of the child care issue, two newspapers were selected: (1) *The Toronto Star*; and (2) *The Globe and Mail*. Both newspapers covered the issue throughout the period 1983 to 1996. In total, the two papers printed 575 stories about child care. Of this total, 331 appeared in *The Toronto Star* and 254 in *The Globe and Mail*. Copies of these articles were obtained, arranged in chronological order, and a content analysis undertaken on each individual article. The Content Analysis Guide for Newspapers (see Appendix C) identified the nature of the article, the issues raised in the articles, and whether the articles were supporting more government action on child care or less. Individual content analyses were combined to provide a profile of the patterns found in each newspaper. These profiles were then assembled to supply a general description of the data and to enable the integration of this information with other forms
of data used in this study. Figure 8-1 illustrates the total number of articles on child care appearing in the print media identified earlier between 1983 to 1996.

Figure 8-1
Total Number of Articles on Child Care Appearing in
*The Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail* between 1983 to 1996

![Graph showing total number of articles on child care from 1983 to 1996.]

Figure 8-2 compares the number of articles written by each of the newspapers analyzed between 1983 to 1996. *The Toronto Star*'s level of coverage of the issue has been most consistent. In comparison, *The Globe and Mail*'s coverage of the child care issue has fluctuated considerably during the period covered.

It should also be noted that individual members of the media appeared to take an interest in the child care issue and consistently wrote about the subject. This would be an interesting area for further analysis to track trends.
The next phase of the content analysis was a review of provincial issues that have been raised about child care. In total, 25 different issues were introduced. Most frequently voiced was the issue of cost followed by the issue of quality. Table 8-8 illustrates the issues raised in newspaper articles.
Table 8-8
Summary and Frequency of Child Care Related Issues Raised in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial government role</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth in demand for child care services</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auspices</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for reform</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal government role</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer responsibility</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic issues</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing demographics</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideology/politics</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The preceding Table illustrates the diversity of issues related to child care in the two prominent newspapers. Similar to other findings of this study, access, affordability, and cost are frequently mentioned issues. However, other frequently cited issues by these media reviewed include the growth in demand for services, the role of all three levels of government, and the economic and demographic factors that are affecting the demand for child care. Once again, while there is some consensus or some frequency with which certain issues are raised, considerable diversity is emerging about the issues the news media may choose to profile and cover.

Through the content analysis, the tenor of articles was also examined. The vast majority of articles appearing in the newspapers reviewed have been positive in tenor—that is, they supported more government funding for child care services. Negative
-- articles opposing more government funding for child care, proved less frequent. Figure 8-3 illustrates the frequency of positive, negative, and neutral articles in the two newspapers examined.

![Figure 8-3](attachment:image.png)

**Figure 8-3**  
Frequency of Positive and Negative Articles Appearing in *The Toronto Star* and *The Globe and Mail* between 1983-1996

As can be seen in the preceding graph, the majority of articles have been positive. Closer examination of graph also reveals a reversal of trends. As the number of opinion pieces declined, the number of positive pieces has increased over the period in question. The final component of the content analysis for the newspapers looked at the number of factual pieces versus the number of opinion pieces. Figure 8-4 illustrates the prevalence of factual pieces over opinion pieces including editorials.
based on the data available, it appears that the *Toronto Star* consistently attends to the child care issue and provides coverage. The *Toronto Star* coverage also appears to present support for quality child care services supported through government funds.

A review of the headlines of the articles reviewed suggests those appearing in the early to mid 1980's focused on the issue of access and the needs of working parents. Headlines such as "Daycare an Essential Matter" (*Toronto Star*, 1983), "Daycare Helps
People Work” (Toronto Star, 1984) and “Adding to our Daycare System” (Toronto Star, 1985) illustrate the media’s focus on parents and the need for child care. As the late 1980’s and 1990’s approached the focus of the media appears to have shifted. Headlines announced significant funding commitments by the Provincial government. “Metro councillors allocate $3.8 million to preserve ailing daycare system” (Globe and Mail, 1989), “$52.8 million more for Queen’s Park – Cash will provide 5,000 subsidized places” (Toronto Star, 1991) are the types of headlines during the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. By 1992 articles concerned about the quality of care and child care reform began to appear. “Quality child care out to be basic right” (Toronto Star, 1992), “Ontario Seeks Reform of Daycare” (Globe and Mail, 1992). During 1993 and 1994 headlines shifted to include child care within the education realm. “Ontario Studies full-day education program for children 3 – 5” (Globe and Mail, 1993), led the headlines during the mid 1990’s.

The review of newspaper articles suggests that the media play a role in determining what issues are on the public’s agenda and the government agenda. In the mid 1980’s newspaper coverage of child care was at its peak. At the same time, the Conservatives in Ottawa and the Liberals in Ontario were seriously considering reform. As government attention shifted to other issues, coverage of the child care issue also began to slide. The analysis could not determine whether coverage was influenced by the political agenda or the reverse. It appears that either could be the case at any given time. Much also appears to depend on the competing issues.
Summary of Key Findings

In Chapter 5: Research and Methodology, several objectives of this study were identified. At this juncture the researcher would like to link the results to the objectives identified earlier. The broad objective of this study was to better understand the agenda-setting process of government and to illustrate that through a conceptual framework.

Data, in particular interview data, supported the existence of several interacting variables that influence the agenda-setting process. All data sources also support the notion that the relationship among such variables is interactive and does not flow in one direction, but rather both directions. Respondents had specific revisions to the proposed framework. Many of these were incorporated. There was consensus among interview respondents that there is a framework or a process that surrounds the creation of political agendas thus confirming the researcher’s view that such a framework existed.

Exploration, Elaboration, and Extension of the Revised Framework for Agenda-setting

This study has considered some of the existing frameworks for agenda-setting including those proposed by Munns (1975), Pross (1986), Dyck (1996), and others. While each framework presented a relevant application and analysis tool, it became apparent that no single framework would meet the needs of this study. Consequently, a framework was proposed to interviewees. Based on the data captured during this study, the researcher recognized the need to revise the conceptual framework to reflect respondent experiences and trends noted among variables.

The remainder of this chapter will provide a more detailed application of the revised agenda-setting framework in light of specific models of agenda and policy-setting
models. This chapter will use the views gained through the various sources of data to further explore the linkages and interrelationships within and across the various parts of the model. The results of this study are not intended to be conclusive but are intended to provide some insights that may add to our knowledge of the dynamics and systems involved in the agenda-setting process at the provincial level of politics. Much of the data presented considers the perceptions and views of those interviewed. Hence, while these may be perceptions only, John Sweeney (a retired Director of Education and former Minister of Community and Social Services) claimed, "within politics, perception is often thought to represent reality." The researchers therefore suggests that while the subjective nature of some of the data presented should be recognized, the validity of data should be considered within the context of the political environment.

**The Policy Community**

In view of the observations about political ideology and its reflection of values and beliefs, the factors influencing those values, beliefs, and ultimately ideology, are critical in understanding the agenda-setting process. This researcher examined the work of two theorists in particular have examined the concept of the policy community: Pal (1992), and Pross (1986). In this section each will be reviewed with a summary of how they have influenced the proposed conceptual framework.

The Policy Community, as described by Pross (1986), fits into the agenda-setting process illustrated in the Revised Agenda-Setting Process model. It accounts for the diversity of individuals and individual experiences of people who can potentially influence the policy model. While Pross himself does not elaborate on the specific
location of the Policy Community within the process, and Dyck (1996) acknowledges the validity of the concept, a framework that allowed the Policy Community to reflect the nature of interaction was not found. Several respondents noted again that this influence is continual and does not happen in any pre-set way. Influence cannot, and should not within a democracy, be limited and hence, the community must be seen as one aspect of the model that can potentially impact the entire process. As a result, I chose to place the Pross(1996) Policy Community under the actual process part of the model to reflect the potential for ongoing interplay and I also chose to refer to it as the Participant Policy Community. The Participant Policy Community will influence the agenda-setting process in different ways at different times. Furthermore, the Participant Policy Community and the Virtual Policy Community can also potentially impact one another.

Pal (1992) extends Pross’s (1996) concept noting that while the policy community recognizes the actors who influence policy in a sector, it does not reflect the patterns of their relationships. Drawing on the work of Coleman and Skogstad (1990) Pal (1992) thus proposes several networks that may influence the policy process. In the first network, the pluralist network, the state and the interest groups are weak. The state is confronted by a number of interest groups all competing for attention. The clientele pluralist network is one in which state agencies become dependent on the interest groups for information, thus resulting in a more participatory policy process. The corporatist networks reflect a strong state influenced by several strong organizations representing differing views in the policy sector. The concentration network results when the state is strong and deals primarily with a single interest group. Finally, the state-directed
network is one in which the state agency is strong but the interest group is relatively weak.

Both models of policy communities/networks present valuable concepts. However, in applying any components of either, it is within the context of policy development. In this study, the proposition is that such communities/networks also influence the agenda-setting process of governments and political parties. Elements of both have influenced the proposed framework. Pross’s (1986) vision of a number of groups, individuals and associations influencing a process has been reflected in the model. Similarly, Pal’s (1992) view of the dynamics between such actors has also influenced the framework. However biased this researchers personal reflections, as well as comments by interviewees, one might suggest that this will be further influenced by a number of variables such as the strength of the government and the opposition parties, economics, personalities, and other variables. These less “concrete” variables form a secondary community, the “virtual” policy community.

The Virtual Policy Community

Several policy models examined in Chapters 2 and 4 (Pal, 1992; Dyck, 1996; and Doern et al., 1995) identified a number of variables that influence the policy and agenda-setting processes of government. Many of these variables have been included in the “virtual policy community” of the revised model. None of the models examined included the number of variables finally illustrated in the revised model. But more importantly, from this researcher’s perspective, each presented the variables as if they affected the process at one point only. It was clear from the feedback during the interviews that
variables such as ideology, economics, personal experiences of Ministers, jurisdictional dynamics, and other forces, had the potential of impacting the process at more than one juncture. Indeed, several respondents suggested that such variables continuously influenced the political agenda and the position of all parties in the legislature. Although Doern et al. (1992) suggests that there is interplay, the models do not accurately reflect this dynamic. Other models, such as the Systems Model presented by Taras (1990), do suggest that interplay and exchange can occur between such variables throughout the process, but fail to consider the full spectrum of variables.

In the child care domain, respondents frequently suggested that within the Virtual Community of variables, economics and ideology significantly impacted the agendas set by politicians at the provincial level. They did so at a number of junctures - not only at the beginning, middle, or end of the process.

**The Agenda-Setting Process**

In consideration of the comments received through the interview process, the researcher proceeded to look at not only the components but also the design of the entire model. Although overall reaction to the model was positive, modest changes were needed to reflect the operation of the system.

The various components of the agenda-setting process model remained relatively unchanged. Respondents did, on occasion, add some features within each component, but all overwhelmingly viewed the model as relatively reflective of what they had personally experienced. What has changed in the model is the notion that each of the engines can, at any given point, be influenced by an element of the Policy or Virtual communities.
Furthermore, not only is there a dynamic between the two, but that dynamic has a significant impact on the degree to which any individual variable within either community may impact on the other parts of the model. The other significant change is the placement of the agenda or end result. In the proposed model, the end result was another engine. In the revised model, the agenda is a third tier influenced by the engines. Furthermore, the end result also has the capacity to influence any aspect of the agenda-setting process at any time.

The second objective was to gain insight into the political elements of the child care debate. Interview data were extraordinarily insightful. Respondents spoke openly about the relationship between the three parties as well as the bureaucracy. One respondent noted that, "(within) the federal government and in the provincial government your main enemy is treasury." Another respondent noted that, "Government bureaucracies don't work well with each other on the ground." On the political side, a senior civil servant noted that the accord between the Liberal government of 1985 and the NDP was largely responsible for many of the Liberal government reforms. Such comments highlighted the influence of internal government mechanics on the agenda-setting process.

The third objective was to gain insight into the philosophical view of child care from the three dominant political parties. Again, interview data was the richest source of data. Respondents were quite forthcoming about their own philosophical views and those they felt reflected the public. For instance, in the view of one former Minister of Community and Social Services, "...it certainly is very important to a political party to have a policy on child care." This statement came from an NDP member. In contrast, a
former Conservative Minister of Community and Social Services noted that his party's philosophy about child care saw "the family as the owner and caretaker of children and the public had little or no role to play in their upbringing." Newspaper articles and Hansard also revealed the philosophical leanings of each party. While it appears that all three agree about the need for reform, placement of child care on the agenda largely depends on leadership on the issue. One respondent spoke of John Sweeney, a former Liberal Minister of Community and Social Services as a leader on the issue stating that he "provided excellent leadership around child care issues."

As part of the creation of a conceptual framework, the researcher hoped to identify variables influencing the agenda-setting process. Interview responses were most useful in achieving this objective since the researcher was able to ask respondents directly about influential variables. Frequency of responses was insightful, while descriptions of the dynamics among variables provided a unique perspective.

Newspaper articles, Hansard, and documents provided information about the political response to social policy issues. The use of public opinion polling and the impact of such results on government direction were revealed. The nature of legislative Hansard also reflected the political strategy among the parties. The data suggests that the emergence of social policy issues on the political agenda is influenced by public opinion, economics, and media.

While more information about the dynamics among variables would be more insightful, the limitation of this study only allowed for the confirmation of variables and some insights. Below is a revised conceptual framework of the agenda-setting process that modified based on the data.
As a result of the response from respondents, the proposed framework was revised to reflect the descriptions and the dynamics described during the interviews.

The first "layer" of the framework consists of two communities: (1) the Participant Policy Community; and (2) the Virtual Community. The Participant Policy Community consists of individuals, groups, and governments who may impact the agenda-setting
process. The second community consists of more “virtual” (less concrete) variables that may impact on the agenda-setting process. This includes economics, ideology, research, history, and issues related to jurisdiction. These variables could not be included in the Participant Policy Community since they are not groups, individuals or agencies, yet, the researcher, based on experience and the interviews, felt it essential to reflect the constant impact of less tangible variables. Both of these communities may impact on the agenda-setting process at any time, and as such, they form the first layer of the agenda-setting process. The second layer of the framework consists of two components: (1) Determinants of Political Action; and (2) Leadership. The content of these components remained largely unchanged from the original framework. The final layer is that of the agenda itself or the results.

The researcher felt it imperative to rationalize the inclusion of so many variables. Hence, to begin a detailed explanation of the proposed model, a description of each of the variables and a review of related literature will be presented. The order in which variables will be reviewed should not be perceived as an order of importance or an order that reflects the degree of the variables’ impact on the process. The revised model tries to convey a more interactive process than that proposed earlier. In addition, the process is not as linear as originally conceived. Furthermore, the notion that the variables can impact on various components of the model at various times has been captured. All revisions are based on the data.
Chapter 9
The Conceptual Framework and Beyond

Within this research, a conceptual framework was sought in order to serve the following objectives:

1) Enable the information gathered from all data sources to be sorted in an organized manner;
2) Enable the researcher to interpret the information within a relevant context;
3) Contribute to the existing knowledge on agenda-setting frameworks;
4) Reduce a myriad of variables to a small number which interact with each other in a reasonably predictable and regular way; and
5) Simplify and generalize the information gathered.

For this study, the discovery of an existing framework or development of a new framework was critical, since the researcher viewed it as a vehicle to transfer theoretical concepts and subjective findings into an understandable depiction of the agenda-setting process. The concept of a framework can help identify key variables and some regularity in the way they are related. Social policy theorist Ian Craib (1989) describes much modern social theory as unintelligible, banal, or pointless. In view of this notion, it became critical that a conceptual framework be identified that transfers theory into a more understandable, and perhaps therefore more relevant and useful, representation of the agenda-setting process. Craib (1989) suggests that few people feel at home with theory or use it in a productive way. If research cannot be applied to the context it is intended to explain, just how useful is it? Craib (1989) offers: “Theory is only a help if we can learn from it, and we can only learn from it if we can use it” (1989, p. 5).

Within this context, the identification of a framework that would be relevant within the academic world and the more applied world was a priority. Craib (1989) notes that the purpose of theory within the social sciences is to explain and understand
experience on the basis of other experiences and general ideas about the world. He goes on to identify three dimensions of theory:

   1) cognitive
   2) affective
   3) normative

The cognitive dimension is described as that which helps to make sense of the fragmentation that so frequently occurs. By this, Craib (1989) suggests that historically, theorists have tried to generalize a theory appropriate to one type of object in the social world and apply it to all types of objects. Typically, according to Craib (1980), social theories have tended to generalize descriptions of social action to descriptions of social structures or vice versa. This is further compounded in terms of the relevance or applicability of the theory by the second dimension, the affective dimension. While this dimension is not responsible for the fragmentation, it does contribute to the obscurities of the arguments and sometimes to the over-emphasis of differences. Finally, the third dimension, the normative dimension, is seen as contributing more to the fragmentation. The normative dimension makes implicit, within the theoretical framework, assumptions about the way the world should be. As a result, concludes Craib (1989), social theory is not only about social processes, conflicts, and problems, but also part of those processes, conflicts, and problems. It is this normative characteristic which makes a theory flexible — that is to say, it can be used to argue different point in different ways in different situations. In the case of this research, the quality would enable not only this researcher and practitioner, but also others, to transfer the framework to other domains within social policy, and thus assist in expanding our knowledge of more than one domain. Craib’s
(1989) view, combined with the observations of Pal (1992), influenced the conceptual framework I searched for, and ultimately, the framework I designed.

Initial research found that many existing conceptual frameworks focused on policy development. Pal (1992) observed that while many view the processes of agenda-setting and problem definition as the first stage of the policy process, this is incorrect and the findings of this research certainly support the notion that the agenda-setting process is indeed a process unto itself, separate from the policy development process. The conceptual framework that has evolved as a result of this study illustrates the various stages, dynamics, and variables that influence the agenda-setting process. It also attempts to reflect many of the frameworks developed by others such as Craib (1989), Pal (1992), Kingdon (1984), Easton et al. (1965) while providing one possible explanation of why certain issues gain precedence over others and why particular kinds of change occur in social policy.

Through the literature reviewed and the researcher’s personal observations, it became clear that within most administrations, policy development occurs within a pre-developed framework and set of processes. The agenda-setting process appears to be somewhat more subjective and contingent on a variety of influences. Each party appeared to be influenced by different variables as they set their agendas. Was it possible to develop a framework so flexible that it illustrated not only the variables, but also the notion that interactions among components surrounding the agenda-setting process could differ depending on a number of variables? The researcher believes that it is possible. This chapter will attempt to elaborate on the Revised Conceptual Framework developed for this study and illustrate how the framework evolved.
The Original Framework and Personal Observations

The original conceptual framework was developed prior to any data collection or analysis. It was primarily based on personal observations and the literature reviewed to date. As an analyst within the Office of the Official Opposition for four years leading up to the 1995 election, the researcher had the opportunity to observe and participate in the agenda and policy-setting processes at Queen’s Park. While observations are largely based on her experience within the Liberal Caucus, the environment at Queen’s Park allows one to learn how other parties are approaching the development of an agenda and the development of policies. Two years prior to the 1995 election, the focus for the Liberal Caucus became one of identifying issues with which the Leader, Lyn McLeod, should be associated. The Conservative Leader, Mike Harris, was known as the tax fighter. How was Lyn McLeod going to be known? The steps taken to answer this question largely became the steps used to create a “Liberal” agenda for the 1995 election.

If Lyn McLeod was going to represent jobs, education, and health care, these issues had to become the agenda put forward.

Once the issues were identified inside, a considerable amount of research was done. Various interest groups were brought in to talk about the issues in their areas. Policies were developed to respond to the perceived issues and focus groups were conducted to test out the agenda and the policies. These steps ultimately led to the writing of the Liberal Action Plan. While the Liberals had embarked on the development of their agenda, the Conservatives and NDP (then in government) were also actively working on the development of agendas. The Liberal approach was somewhat different. That is, they saw themselves as the middle ground, the voice of reason. They tried to
reach out to all groups and all sectors. In comparison, both the NDP and the Conservatives focused on representing the views and opinions of those who traditionally supported them. For the Conservatives this suggest that a review of their appointments may reveal meetings with members of the business community and for the NDP this meetings with labour groups. The Liberals met with both.

As the process unfolded, it appeared that there were some elements that influenced all three parties. For instance, staff from each of the three parties routinely compared their Leader’s media coverage for the week. Similarly, each awaited polling results anxiously. Finally, common to all three was a concern about the economy. More and more all three parties were talking about deficit reduction, expenditure reduction, and government efficiencies. Conversely, there appeared to be some variables which parties responded to quite differently. In the case of the NDP and particularly the Conservatives, ideology was very influential. The Liberals saw themselves as more flexible and less attached to an ideology other than the creation of a fair and equal society. Based on these observations, the first conclusion the researcher drew in relation to the conceptual framework was that it had to allow for the influence of a number of variables on the agenda-setting process.

When asked about leadership on the child care issue, all respondents felt that the kind of leadership needed to move the child care issue forward did not exist, and had not existed for many years. Sue Colley, a former advocate and Executive Assistant to the Minister of Health under the NDP, did feel that there had been leadership. She stated:

Frankly, I think there are lots of people speaking up for child care compared to many other issues. Even think about health care. What voices do we have for health care? The OMA is the only voice for health care, it’s really worrying...So
I think, yeah, child care has been truly remarkable in being able to sustain a leadership role, a public advocacy role for so many years. (Colley, 1997)

Within the broader context of leadership, the creation of an image for the Leader also appeared to be somewhat of an obsession for each of the parties. When respondents were asked to identify leadership skills, qualities such as vision, commitment, understanding, and credibility within Caucus and within the public sphere were seen to be critical. Prior to the 1995 election each of the three parties in Ontario spent countless hours and dollars trying to create an image for its leader. While the researcher might argue (with some bias) that most of Lyn McLeod’s leadership skills (as noted above) were superior to Mike Harris, the weakest was that of perception within the public domain where she was perceived as the little woman from Thunder Bay, granny-like, and not quite the Leader that Ontario was waiting for. On the other hand, Mike Harris, over the years, had built up the image of a Bay Street man of strength. His intelligence or understanding of the issues only became relevant when the media “caught” him making an error. The researcher can still recall Mike Harris’s confusion about the physicians wanting to meet when the Social Contract was being developed. The Social Contract was a vehicle through which the government could reduce expenditures by imposing wage cuts on all public service employees. Conversely, Harris and Rae were identified by their traditional supporters as men of leadership ability. This may have been gender related and perhaps worthy of a separate study. As part of the effort to build the leadership image, the press held a tremendous amount of power. How they chose to portray stories or questions about each appeared to have an impact on the public perception of each. It thus became evident to
me, that the influence of leadership had to be portrayed as more than another variable since it appeared the leadership itself was impacted by so many factors.

In their wish to please all sectors of society, the Liberals developed an election platform that offered something for everyone. What they perhaps did not consider was whether the issues identified were legitimate, had support, and were feasible in terms of policy development and implementation. As a result, the “pot luck” appeared to offer something for everyone but fully satisfied no one. In comparison, the Conservatives ensured that their traditional supporters were fully satisfied with their platform and they simply did not concern themselves with voters who did not vote Conservative. The NDP appeared to make small attempts at satisfying labour, but were unsuccessful in capturing that support which they so desperately needed. Based on the researcher’s personal observations while at Queen’s Park, the labour community was still angry about the Social Contract and this had impacted the trust between the NDP and the labour movement.

The final observation has to do with the cycle. Within the agenda-setting process, there appeared to be a constant cycle of review. Therefore, there had to be a loop. The process was not conclusive but rather, continued to repeat itself. With each cycle, different variables may impact in varying degrees. This too needed to be reflected in the framework.

The above observations led the researcher to develop the first conceptual framework that was then shown to respondents who were asked to comment on the accurate depiction of what they perceived the agenda-setting process to be. From these comments, the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework was developed.
A Rationale for Changes to the Proposed Agenda-Setting Framework

While initial reaction to the model was positive from 14 of the 15 respondents interviewed, each had some changes they would have liked to see. Since the framework was developed to facilitate the organization of data and the reflection of the experiences had by others, it was evident that those changes most frequently identified by respondents needed to be reflected in a revised version. Respondents agreed with the components within the framework but felt that the organization of the model needed work. Overwhelmingly, it was noted that many of the influences from the interest groups, or even the economy, happened throughout the process, as opposed to only at the beginning. What was apparently needed was a model that allowed such variables to influence the agenda-setting process at any given time. Second, it was viewed by most that the agenda itself potentially had an impact on the variables and this cycle needed to be reflected. Other changes focused on the inclusion of certain variables such as jurisdiction and the bureaucracy. These comments combined with additional reading, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, led to the evolution of the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework.

How the Framework is Intended to Work

In principle, the reader should be able to understand the flow of the framework without a detailed description if it is to be relevant and useful as stated in the objectives. However, to ensure an accurate understanding for the purpose of this study the researcher will spend some time explaining each of the elements and how each fits into the overall schema.
The first layer contains two distinct policy communities: 1) The Virtual Policy Community; and 2) The Participant Policy Community. As noted earlier, 14 of the 15 respondents liked the proposed model. Many did, however, identify the need to reflect the continuous influence of variables as well as the inclusion of variables such as jurisdiction. Some of these variables did not fit into Participant Policy Community but clearly influenced the process in a similar manner. As a result, the researcher chose to collectively place these in the Virtual Policy Community, which allowed for the illustration of the continuous impact as well as the comparable nature of that influence to the Participant Policy Community. In the case of both Policy Communities, they have been placed at the bottom, but with the ability to influence the model at a number of levels. Similarly, these Communities can influence the agenda-setting process in more than one place at a time. In addition, not only do these two Policy Community impacts on other levels and components of the model, but also on each other. For instance, the economic variable may impact on other government agencies and their position on a particular issue and their ability to act. These dynamics are constantly changing and responding to the environment. What became apparent from the interviews was that in the case of child care, the economic variable was influential at a number of levels including the Participant Policy Community, the Determinants of Action, and ultimately on the agenda itself.

The second level of the framework contains the Determinants of Political Action and Leadership Engines. The composition of these engines has not changed from the initial proposal but their position has. This repositioning was done to reflect the potential for continuous impact of the two policy communities as well as the potential impact of
the Determinants and the Leadership Engine on other aspects of the model. Therefore, while the Determinants of Action may be influenced by the Policy Communities, there could be a reciprocal influence on the Policy Communities from the second level.

The third level is that of the agenda itself which, again, is impacted not only by the second level, but also the first. Furthermore, the potential for the agenda itself to impact on the Policy Communities or the Determinants of Political Action or Leadership has also been reflected. No longer does the framework operate in one direction as originally proposed. Rather, the respondents' comments coupled with additional literature (Craib, 1989; Kingdon, 1984; Mazzoni, 1991) led to the creation of a framework that is made up of components that are more interactive with one another than originally suggested. In addition, the notion that the dynamic between variables and among levels of the framework can be of varied strengths has been reflected through the different connections. On this point, it should be noted that while some variables may influence the process, others may not, or some may influence the process only with a particular political party, and this variability is an important feature. This characteristic allows the framework to be applied to other contexts of agenda-setting within the sphere of social services.

**Applying the Framework to Child Care in Ontario**

Hall et al. (1975) propose a systems framework for social policies in which they identify two dominant features: 1) demand; and 2) supply. Within the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework, demand and supply are components of the Virtual Policy Community. The work of Hall et al. (1975) and the inclusion of demand and supply is
important particularly in the study of the child care issue. While Hall et al. (1975) include the demand and supply concepts within the policy framework, in this research it has been transferred to the agenda-setting framework. Briefly, Hall et al. (1975) suggest that demands could come from the various players within the Policy Community and are directed towards the authorities of a political system. The authorities are pressured to respond to a sufficient number of these demands to retain their support in the community. Such demands must be managed. In the model proposed by Hall et al. (1975), some demands will be rejected completely, while others will be developed into comprehensive issues which will be slotted into the policy process. Similarly, within the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework, some demands will land on the political agenda and others will not. Within the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework, the successful placement of a demand on the political issue will be influenced by a number of variables such as others within the Virtual Policy Community or the Policy Community or perhaps the two engines of Leadership and Determinants of Political Action.

The second component of the revised framework is support. Again within the policy construct, Hall et al. describe support as a component that influences the content and timing of many policies. Similarly, within the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework, support, located in the Virtual Policy Community, can potentially influence not only the placement of an issue on the political agenda, but also the priority of that issue within the agenda. As a result, an issue, such as child care or education, may appear to be a priority on a party’s or a government’s agenda at one time, compared to other occasions when these authorities are reluctant to give the issue a high priority. This is largely determined by support.
Within the Revised Agenda-Setting Framework, demand and support may be in conflict with each other. Demand for child care has steadily been increasing as more and more women with young children have entered the labour market and consequently need child care. Government support for child care has also increased steadily, but it appears from the ongoing demands for child care services, that demands have not been met. Even when opinion polling suggests a high level of support for additional funding, child care demand has not been adequately met. Is there a perception within government that doing so would not garner support? These are the types of dynamics that have surrounded the child care issue and its appearance on assorted political agendas.

A conceptual framework is intended to help understand these dynamics. As demonstrated in the analysis of data, it appears that in the case of child care, variables such as ideology, economy, media, and public opinion have significantly influenced the appearance of child care on the political agendas of governments and political parties in Ontario. This conceptual framework assisted in identifying variables, dynamics, and processes involved the construction of those agendas.
Chapter 10
Anticipations and Conclusions

As one looks back at the historical development of various social systems such as our education and health care enterprises, each has been an issue that we as a province have struggled with. The creation of universal access to health care and education was preceded by considerable debate, in favour and opposed, to the notion of a fully funded and accessible system. Is it really, then, any wonder that the child care issue is also being vigorously debated? What may further complicate the issue, are the very social service systems that are universally accessible but are now under considerable scrutiny from governments, and some sectors of the electorate who believe in notions such as user fees, eliminating the concept of a one-tiered system accessible to all. As child care advocates present research supporting the importance of the early years, governments and the electorate wonder whether we can truly sustain another universal system when those we have appear to be in jeopardy.

The purpose of this research study was to examine a number of issues related to the agenda-setting process within one provinces recent politics. Through a number of sources the researcher was able to collect information about elected officials’ perceptions of the dynamics influencing the agenda-setting process. She had the opportunity to interview individuals such as former Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Community and Social Services, who provided a very unique window onto those dynamics. In addition, the researcher was able to examine provincial documents, published and unpublished, that presented another unique view of child care and the agenda-setting process. Finally, she had the opportunity to review legislative questions on the child care issue as well as
print media from two major newspapers. Combined, the data have enabled the researcher to meet the five objectives of this study:

1) To identify and gain insight into the political elements of the child care debate in Ontario;

2) To gain insight into the philosophical view of child care from the perspective of the three dominant political parties in Ontario;

3) To identify some of the variables influencing the political agendas in Ontario;

4) To develop a model/framework of the agenda-setting process; and

5) To develop a better understanding of the relationship between the political response to child care within the broader social policy context.

In this final chapter the findings and insights gained as they relate to each of the five objectives will be summarized. It should also be noted, once again, that as much effort as possible was made to reduce the bias of the research towards quality child care, but also her political leanings, it cannot be completely eliminated and thus, this should be considered in the review of findings.

The Political Elements of the Child Care Debate in Ontario

Based on the data collected, the child care debate in Ontario has primarily focused on issues of accessibility, affordability, and quality. On the issues of affordability and accessibility, the debate has heeded on the following aspects:

1) What is government’s role in the delivery of child care services?

2) What is government’s role in the funding of child care services?

3) Who is responsible for the care of children?
Those in favour of a more universally accessible and affordable child care system argue that Ontario is facing a child care crisis. Some even suggest that while we as a society talk about the importance of children, and the critical period during the first five years of life, our structures and systems do not reflect our words. For the vast majority of families across Ontario there is an economic necessity for both parents to work. Similarly, among single parent families, the need to work is self-evident. Child care costs can exceed $10,000 per child annually. Even for middle-income families, such costs can make employment prohibitive. While politicians talk about the need to reduce welfare lists by forcing people to work, nowhere in sight does there appear to be any thought given to the issue of child care -- an economic necessity for most families regardless of their structure. Those opposed to more government involvement in child care argue that the marketplace should deal with the issue, except perhaps in cases of severe poverty.

**The Philosophical Views of Child Care**

The debate about child care services and the governmental role in the funding and delivery of those services has found its way onto the agendas of politicians locally, provincially, and nationally in Canada and other jurisdictions. While some governments such as the French and German governments have chosen to view child care as an early education program that is an essential program for families, others, such as governments in North America, have continued to avoid the policy debate by avoiding any substantive change to child care services. There do appear to be three dominant views of the nature of child care services. The first views child care as a child welfare service that is paid for by government when a child is seen to be at risk due to economic or other factors. The
second views child care as an employment support that women who choose to enter the workforce need to have but must pay for on their own or to the extent to which they are able. Based on this researcher’s observations, it appears that in North America child care is seen less frequently as an educational services that provides children with stimulation and opportunities that will enable them to reach their full potential. In Europe it is largely treated as an education program.

Certainly, the recent research on brain development during the first three years should cause society, and its structures and systems including government, to consider more aggressively the impact of access to quality child care programs that have a strong educational base. However, this researcher cannot say that any one view of child care services is more important or meaningful. Rather, based on the research conducted throughout this study, this researcher would like to suggest that child care services can serve all three needs. The three identified views of child care need to merge and form the strong basis for a child care system that not only sees itself as a child welfare service in some cases, an employment support in others, but an educational opportunity for all children. Figure 10-1 illustrates the “meeting of the objectives” which I feel needs to happen within child care.
In a review of literature on school readiness (Doherty, 1997) the “Community” component identified child care services as a provision needed by families to support parents in their roles. Under “Society,” the affordability of these services as a component that government must address was also recognized. Doherty’s findings suggest that while professionals agree on what is needed to help support families, policy makers, politicians, and those in the “inner-circle” have yet to be convinced. It was evident from the interviews conducted for this study that in the view of politicians and civil servants, families do indeed need assistance in terms of accessing quality child care. Some of those interviewed even understood the developmental impact of poor quality child care
versus high quality child care. Yet, while in government, none were able to move
government policy in the direction of a more affordable, high quality, regulated child care
system. The findings of this study suggest that other variables, such as economics and
public opinion significantly influence the decisions made by Cabinet. While many may
agree in principle with the move towards a universal child care system in practice, when
other variables are factored in, the support begins to erode.

The Variables Influencing Political Agendas

The variables presented in the proposed conceptual framework were all identified
as key variables by interview respondents. All agreed that the variables do interact and
that individually and collectively they have an impact on the agenda-setting process. In
the case of child care, variables such as ideology, economics, and media were seen as
particularly influential.

Child care has appeared on the provincial political agendas of various Ontario
governments and has served many purposes. Table 1-1 in Chapter 1 endeavoured to
chronicle the various roles governments have given child care. In its early years, it was
primarily seen as an employment support for working women and a child welfare service.
More recently, two political parties, the NDP and the Liberals, have also placed it on the
agenda as an educational program for young children. In more recent years, however, the
issue has slipped from the political agenda in terms of its prominence, and the context
within which it appears has also changed significantly. This analysis found that the three
parties do have distinct views about child care. However, in practice, while significant
changes were made (e.g., funding non-profits and profit centres differently), each party delivered child care as a targeted service and not as a universally accessible service.

In 1985, at a time when the economy was seen to be growing, politicians talked about how important the child’s early years were. The government talked about commitments to implement junior kindergarten programs in all parts of the province as a first step in the development of an early years program. Advocates had apparently educated politicians about child care and the impact of quality child care on children. But as the economy began a downward spiral, those same governments, while still placing child care on the agenda, did so in the context of a more targeted service for the economically disadvantaged. With the election of a social democratic government in 1990, child care regained a prominent place on the agenda, brought there for ideological reasons, but soon displaced by a collapsing economy. More recently, as governments talk more about tax-cuts, deficit fighting, and expenditure reductions, child care is often referred to as a familial responsibility and one not to be interfered with by the government.

What became clear through the interview data was for many former Ministers and Deputy Ministers, and certainly all civil servants, child care was seen as a necessity, but they felt it was a necessity government could not afford to fund. Given the fact that the research demonstrating the importance of the early years and the impact of quality child care on those years continues to mount, many can see the benefit, but politically, they are apprehensive. Perhaps what child care needs to appreciate this is a “white knight” who is committed to the concept of universal child care and not swayed by the politics of the issue. A number of interviewees described John Sweeney as an individual who has
improved child care in this way. Despite considerable opposition within the Liberal Caucus, Sweeney is widely seen (in this study’s sample) more than any other Minister, as improving the child care situation in Ontario more than any other Minister. Specifically, he is valued for bettering wages and fee subsidies, and being responsible for the policy that required school boards to build new schools with child care facilities. It should be added that many of the politicians, who noted Sweeney’s accomplishments on this issue, attributed that success to several factors including his own leadership style, and his own experiences that had an impact on his understanding of the issue. Marian Boyd a former NDP Minister stated,

When you talk about traits and leadership you are talking about ability to be articulate and the ability to compromise...Because when you’re fighting an up hill battle if you don’t have the fire in the belly you really can’t do it...(John Sweeney) was fortunate because he had the example of his children. I mean John was particularly fortunate because, I forget the child’s name who did the City Hall child care centre and the work that happened there, and the very fine combination of professional ideals and social ideals that went into that. So sure, personal circumstance was a strong factor. (Boyd, 1997)

Is there a point at which philosophy supersedes politics? There may be such a point, but how many politicians are able to successfully put philosophy first? This also begs the questions of whether politicians are representing their views at the table or those of their constituents. Regardless, in the child care debate, the dynamics have turned child care into something of a political football that may be bounced back and forth depending on the party in power.
**Understanding the Political Response to the Issue**

Data from the interviews suggests that ideology, economics, public opinion, and interest groups are the most influential factors impacting on political agendas. What does this mean? Should those advocating for a more universal child care spend more time addressing the economic issues? Should they try to change political ideology of certain parties? Or should they spend more time educating the media about the impact of quality child care? Perhaps they should be doing all of the above. At the very least, the position taken here is that advocates should be keeping in mind the dynamics as suggested in the Revised Agenda-Setting Process presented in this paper. Perhaps an understanding of the dynamics will lead to a different approach to advocacy.

The various roles of child care are roles that many, regardless of political bias, are likely to support. The debate does not begin here for many (although a small percentage of respondents did indicate that some in society still feel that mothers should work at home). Rather, the debate begins when a society and its politicians start to address the issues of cost, delivery, and monitoring of any such system. It became evident from respondents that the current system was unacceptable for a variety of reasons. Based on interview data, a review of provincial documents, and a review of print media coverage of the issue, the debate is not really about whether child care should be on the political agenda or not, but rather, it is about what the government role is in the funding and delivery of the service.
An Application to the Broader Social Policy Context

Many of the variables identified as influencing the agenda-setting process are perhaps the same variables forcing governments to cut budgets and reduce the universality of some of our social programs. For instance, overwhelmingly, a number of respondents identified economics as a significant variable that influenced political agendas. The preoccupation of government and the electorate on deficit control and expenditure reductions are economic variables motivating government to cut in areas such as welfare, health care, and education. It appears unlikely that any government, of any political stripe, will choose to place universal child care on the agenda while the universality of other systems is being challenged, and successfully reduced, in some jurisdictions. Furthermore, more recently, government insiders suggest that while the public may be sympathetic to the child care issue, the accessibility and quality of our health care system is of paramount concern.

In a recent discussions with a colleague, this researcher spoke about the need to address the issue of the early years in a more comprehensive rather than political manner. It is clear that there is a “wave” of interest among politicians and the public about children. Ideally, rather than placing child care and children on the political agenda, what we really need to do is take them off the political agenda and simply do what the research is so clearly telling us we need to do — but this is an entirely different discussion. That is, the argument can be made to invest in programs and services that provide educational opportunities to our youngest citizens and support families so that their ability to promote their child’s development is enhanced. In Ontario, this would require an all-party
agreement of some sort and a new mechanism through which the parties could work collectively.

Manzer’s (1985, 1994) work has led this researcher to believe that it would perhaps be a most challenging task in view of the notion that politics is a reflection of our values and beliefs and these vary widely. However, recently a number of providers of children’s services as well as funders such as Trillium, Invest In Kids Foundation, Laidlaw and Atkinson, all came together to see if they could put aside their own agendas and collectively develop an Ontario, public awareness campaign about children and youth. Some organizations such as Invest in Kids Foundation have already implemented large scale public awareness campaigns that are focused on raising the level of understanding about the early years and influencing parents and how they parent. Perhaps if people understand the importance of the early years they will be more likely to demand that governments provide quality services such as child care because of the potential impact on a child’s development. Perhaps it was most eloquently said by Daniel Keating and Fraser Mustard (1996) stated:

During this period of rapid change, it is important to recognize the interdependence of economic and social development. Successful ‘new economies’ will place a high premium on knowledge and innovation, which depend on a society’s human resources. Failure to invest in all stages of human development, particularly the early years, will negatively affect future economic prosperity in two ways. First, we may lack the human resources needed to sustain future economic growth. Second, we may increase the social burden arising from problems that begin early in an individual’s development that then create multiple costs for the individual and for society over time. (p. 8)
**Questions and Implications for Future Research**

It is the hope of the researcher that this study provided some insight into the agenda-setting process of political parties in Ontario. In addition, through this study several issues needing further research also surfaced. For instance, Marion Boyd and Frances Lankin both raised the issue of gender as a variable at the Cabinet table. They felt strongly that the greater number of women at Cabinet, the greater the chance of issues such as child care, traditionally seen as a women’s issue, will be placed on political agendas.

This study attempted to identify variables influencing the agenda-setting process. This study did not lead to an intensive investigation of each variable identified. In the case of frequently identified variables such as economics, ideology, media and public opinion, a more detailed analysis could be enlightening. How do these variables influence the agenda-setting process, the agenda, and one another in the process?

The other issue that needs more study is the issue of advocacy. Many groups within the social policy arena spend enormous time, effort, and money on educating policy makers and politicians. The questions surface. How effective are these efforts? How effective have they been in actually influencing the agendas of government? One might hypothesize that on its own, advocacy is not very influential, but in combination with other variables it can be effective.

In view of the Education Act from 1887 one might also examine the forces that changed the purpose of junior kindergarten from three years of age to five years of age. What factors influenced that shift? Was it deliberate, in response to public pressure, or an oversight?
Each of the areas identified as in need of further study can potentially help the academic community understand the interplay of variables and the agenda-setting process. In addition, further research could also better enable the way in which various members of the Participant Policy Community influence policy.
Bibliography


Government of Canada, House of Commons, Special Committee on Child Care. Sharing the responsibility. Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada.


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Toronto Star, 1983-1996 – Child care articles


Dear,

My name is Chaya Kulkarni and I am currently a Doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). As part of my doctoral research, during the course of the next year I will be examining the policy process used by various governments as they tried to address child care issues in Ontario. Specifically, the purpose of my study is to uncover some of the reasons why child care policy in Ontario has not moved forward as much as child care advocates had hoped. I will be examining the policy process(es) used by various governments and the variables that have influenced that process or processes. I will be interviewing former Ministers of Community and Social Services, senior civil servants within the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and key members of the child care advocacy movement. I will be focusing on the period between 1983 to the present.

I believe that documentation of the events surrounding child care policy development is during this time period is limited. It is my hope that this study will not only help us understand the policy processes) used by various governments, but also provide an historical record that is not available through traditional sources such as books.

Your participation in this study will be invaluable. Your contribution will provide a unique and valuable perspective on the issue.

If you agree to participate, I would require approximately 2 hours of your time to conduct a semi-structured interview. With your permission the interview will be tape recorded to ensure accuracy during the analysis. The interview would be conducted at a time and place convenient to you.

I will be contacting you by phone during the next week with the hope that you will agree to participate. At that time I will be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have about the study. Should you wish to contact me sooner than that I can be reached at (416) 445-5361.

Respectfully yours,

Chaya Kulkarni
INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT LETTER OF CONSENT

I __________________ agree to participate in the doctoral study conducted by Chaya Kulkarni, a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. I understand that she will be looking at issues regarding child care policy development between 1983 to the present.

I am aware that the interview which will be conducted by Mrs. Kulkarni will be recorded to maintain an accurate record. I am also aware that my responses may be sighted in her final dissertation.
I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about your views on issues surrounding the child care debate in Ontario. Let me begin by clarifying what I mean by child care care. I am referring to those programs licensed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services through the Day Nurseries Act, run weekdays, generally from 7:00 am till 6:00 p.m. for children ranging in age from 6 months to 6 years, and those programs that provide before and after school care. Programs in this category which meet the needs of young children (under 5) are also often referred to as early childhood education. I would specifically like to talk to you about the progress made in terms of child care policy, the public debate, the political dynamics, and some of the reasons you think policy has not moved forward enough, or perhaps has moved forward too much in your view.

My questions will focus on four areas - attitudes and perceptions, change agents/forces, leadership, and processes. I will be interviewing former Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Community and Social Services as well as advocates of child care and opponents. I am hoping that you will share with me, as candidly as possible, your thoughts on the issues.

ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

1. Do you believe child care has become a political "football" during the past 15 years? (Why do you think this is so?)

2. Can you describe your (party's) (organization) (personal) vision for child care in Ontario?

3. What is the public's view of child care in Ontario?

4. What has led to this view? Is any one or group actively promoting this view? Are there other dynamics you think have influenced the public's view on child care?

5. Where do you see child care in relation to our public education system?

6. How have changes in power and ideology influenced child care policy in Ontario?

CHANGE AGENTS AND FORCES

1. What are the forces that have turned child care into a "political" issue?

2. In your opinion, who are the key players (both organizational and individuals)? What are their positions on the issues? What have they been doing? How effective have they been?
3. Here is a list of some of what are seen as the most significant changes in child care policy. Can you tell me what you believe led to this action? What was your role in this process?

4. In my study I have suggested that there are four "engines" that drive the policy process. Here are the four engines. How would you place them in terms of their physical relationship to one another and also the content of each engine?

5. In one of the engines which I call "Dominant Variables" I have suggested that the following variables have played a role in influencing this issue and government action on this issue:

   political ideology       advocacy groups
   political context       opposition groups/individuals
   economics              history
   media                  research
   public opinion

Are there any variables you would like to add or omit? Which of these do you feel most influenced the action taken or not taken?

6. What do you see as the major hurdles to the development of a more comprehensive child care policy in Ontario?

7. Where do you think the primary source of opposition is coming from?

LEADERSHIP

1. Who do you think are the real leaders, the idea champions, in the issues we have been discussing? Who or what do they represent?

2. Ultimately, who or what has the most influence on the outcomes?

3. How do the "leaders" on this issue raise awareness and encourage others to focus on the issue?

4. How do you think the "leaders(s) interacts with other change agents such as media, research, opposition, advocates and others identified as Dominant Variables earlier?

PROCESS

1. Can you describe the approach taken by government(s) in the development of child care policy? Where does the process begin and where does it end?
2. Do you think changing the process would lead to different, perhaps better in your view, outcomes?

3. Do you think the political process can be influenced?
### Hansard Analysis Guide

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<th>Political Party Asking the Question</th>
<th>Tenor of Questions</th>
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## Newspaper Analysis Guide

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Appendix E
INTERVIEW CONTENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

Type of Data:  

X Interview

News paper

Government Document

Political Document

Title of Document or Name of Individual:

Name of Organization/Group/Political Party

Position of Individual (if applicable):

Summary of respondents personal vision of child care

Summary of respondent's views of the public's perceived attitudes and perceptions:

Are personal perceptions and attitudes positive or negative about child care?

Are views of the public's perceived attitudes about child care positive or negative?

What change agents and forces were identified?

Who and/or what were identified as "key players"?

Overall response to model was positive or negative?

Comments on variables:

Changes suggested to model:

Summary of identified obstacles and hurdles:

Summary of identified leaders and idea champions:

Additional comments on process:

Other remarks:

Summary of interview:
Title of Document:

Published/Unpublished

Year of Publication

Source (ie Government Ministry):

Purpose of Document:

Was the document supportive of more government support for child care?

Was the document opposed to more government support for child care?

Did the document reflect a vision for child care in Ontario?

If yes, what was the vision?
List of Respondents

Charles Beer
Marion Boyd
Elinor Caplan
Sue Colley
Kay Eastham
Robyn Gallimore
Frances Lankin
Lyn Lovell
Charles Pascal
Robert Elgie
Val Gibbons
Irene Kyle
Julie Mathien
Kerry McQuaig
John Sweeney
Appendix I

List of Published and Unpublished Documents

1. Child Care Services in Ontario – 1984
   A Background Paper – available at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit, Toronto, Ontario

2. The Business Case for Child Care – 1989 – Ministry of Community and Social Services Archives

3. Cabinet Submission - Child Care Cycle II – Strategic Direction – 1989 – Ministry of Community and Social Services


   Update on Child Care Reform – not in any public domain

6. Briefing Note – 1989
   New Directions for Child Care – Report on Year Two (1988/89) and Forecast for Year Three – not in any public domain

7. Cabinet Submission – Child Care Reform – 1993 – not in any public domain

8. Child Care Reform – Cabinet Submission Overview – 1994 – not in any public domain

   Internal Liberal Document

10. Improving Ontario’s Child Care System – 1996
    Ministry Report – Ministry of Community and Social Services