


Multiple Births
Naissances multiples
C A N A D A
**National
Multiple Births
Awareness Day!**
May 28th



Multiple Births Canada /

Naissance multiples Canada

PO Box 432

Wasaga Beach, ON

Canada L9Z 1A4

Tel. / Tél. : 1-705-429-0901

Fax / Téléc. : 1-705-429-9809

Toll Free / No. sans frais :

1-866-228-8824

office@multiplebirthscanada.org

www.multiplebirthscanada.org

*Supporting
Multiple Births
Together*

NAME OF NEWSPAPER

May 2010

Dear Editor,

When Employment Insurance (EI) maternity and parental benefits were first enhanced ten years ago, the intent was communicated clearly to all Canadians. Minister Stewart's news release states - "Through the extension of EI maternity and parental benefits, the Government of Canada is providing families with the support they need to ensure that their children get the best start in life. As a result of the EI changes, a growing number of working parents can better balance their work and family responsibilities by staying at home with their newborn for one year without fear of losing their job."

The objectives of the enhanced programme state - *The first year of a child's life is considered to be a critical window of opportunity during which the foundation is laid for the development of the child (McCain and Mustard, 1999; Brooks-Gunn, Han and Waldfogel, 2002). Infants benefit from increased opportunities to be nurtured and stimulated by their parents (McCain and Mustard, 1999). A "secure attachment" between the infant and parent sets the basis for later relationships, emotional and social behaviours, problem solving, and academic performance (Berkwith, 1990; Main, 1990; Keating, 1993). Over the long-run, this could enhance human capital development leading to better labour market options.*

As forward-thinking as this announcement was ten years ago, it did not then nor does it now address the needs of Canada's multiple-birth community. Many of our families cannot return to work with a close bond with each of their multiple infants, due to the double and triple demands on their time by their babies. Many cannot find placements for two children or more in the same daycare facility, public or private. Many regrettably cannot return to the workplace and contribute as before because of these realities—an indication that current EI Parental Leave provisions are failing them.

We believe it is time for the Government of Canada to follow the lead of European countries and consider qualitative and quantitative research that indicates the experience of caring for newborn multiples is remarkably different than caring for a single-born infant, as it places additional demands on multiple-birth parents. These countries acknowledge the compelling evidence that indicates multiple-birth infants need more time with their parents at home to care for their needs. These countries have passed legislation providing additional family leave benefits for their multiple-birth families—including Finland, where multiple-birth parents may take 10 additional weeks for each additional child, and Sweden, where multiple-birth families receive 180 additional days for each additional child. We applaud these nations for not only recognizing the challenges multiple-birth families face, but also changing their legislation to reflect the needs of these families.

The positive outcome of additional leave time for parents of multiples is:

1. *Mothers have better support during pregnancy complications*
2. *Parents can better focus on short or long term health problems of the infants*
3. *Primary caregiver is better equipped to handle physical and emotional stress*
4. *Parents can focus on their babies not their financial challenges*
5. *Babies will have better (quality and quantity) bonding time with parents*

A Backgrounder detailing these issues is posted online at www.multiplebirthscanada.org.

On May 28th, you will see supporters of this year's National Multiple Births Awareness Day theme - *Canada's EI Parental Leave must reflect the needs of multiple-birth infants* - rallying in front of the office of our local MP (NAME) and (LOCATION). Our goal is to draw attention to this important message so future multiple-birth families will benefit from our advocacy efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUR NAME AND NAME OF CHAPTER/NON MEMBER GROUP
YOUR SIGNATURE