

For Immediate Release
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EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES *Ontario Child Benefit To Help 1.3 Million Children And 600,000 Families*

LONDON - The McGuinty government introduced the Ontario Child Benefit in the 2007 Budget to expand opportunities for children in all low-income families — whether their parents are able to work or not, Minister of Community and Social Services Madeleine Meilleur said today.

“The Ontario Child Benefit will help all children in low income families and allows parents to move off social assistance without the fear of losing support for their children,” said Meilleur. “Investing in our most vulnerable is about giving everyone an opportunity to succeed. This is the right thing to do for our society and for the economy.”

Ontario’s 2007 budget will invest an additional \$2.1 billion in low-income families with children over the next five years through the Ontario Child Benefit. It will provide low-income families with up to \$250 per child this July and grow to a maximum of \$1,100 per child by 2011. These reforms would go well beyond ending the deduction of the National Child Benefit Supplement from social assistance, investing four times as much money to help many more children – including some who are not currently on social assistance.

“Our government has fundamentally changed the way we deliver social services to a system that treats families and their children with the respect they deserve,” said Deb Matthews, MPP for London North Centre. “This investment will expand opportunities for Ontario’s children and families to help build a strong and more prosperous Ontario.”

Other measures from the 2007 Budget that will benefit children and families include:

- Increasing social assistance rates by 2 per cent — a 7 per cent increase since 2003
- Raising the minimum wage to \$10.25 in 2010
- Enhancing child care funding by \$25 million in 2007-08, growing to \$50 million annually starting in 2008-09
- Improving supports for at-risk families with children with an investment of over \$5 million.

“Our government is serious about helping all Ontario children get a good start in life and to help lower income families break out of the poverty cycle,” said Minister of Children and Youth Services Mary Anne Chambers. “It’s the right thing to do for our children and the smart thing to do for our society.”

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