

# PROVINCIAL ELECTION 2007

## Ontario Child Benefit

In the 2007 provincial budget, a new Ontario Child Benefit was created. This new benefit will go to all eligible low-income families with children. When it is fully implemented in 2011, the maximum benefit will be \$92/month per child between the ages of 0-18 years.

The new benefit will be available to all low-income families, regardless of whether they are working or on social assistance. When a family leaves social assistance, they will not lose their child benefits.

In conjunction with the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit, social assistance rates are going to be restructured. The monthly benefits for families with children in receipt of Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will be reduced. While it appears that all families will be better off as a result of the Ontario Child Benefit, many anti-poverty activists are disappointed that the Ontario Child Benefit does not result in a greater increase in income, especially for families on social assistance. Consider, for example, that in 2011, when the Ontario Child Benefit is fully implemented, a single mother on Ontario Works, with one child, will only be better off by approximately \$50/month.

## Ask candidates:

- i) Will your party maintain the Ontario Child Benefit announced in the 2007 budget?
- ii) Will your party commit to speeding up the implementation of the Ontario Child Benefit?
- iii) Given that social assistance rates are going to be restructured, will your party, within six months of taking office, establish an expert panel, including low-income people, policy experts and advocates, to determine just and rational criteria for setting OW and ODSP rates, with the goal of ensuring everyone has a decent standard of living?