

# 2007

## Advocating for Adequacy

Anti-poverty groups and low-income people gather to hear the 2007 Budget speech. A new Ontario Child Benefit is announced, a huge win for low-waged working parents.

ISAC's efforts contribute to a partial win for the 170,000 children whose families are on OW and ODSP - they also receive the OCB. But welfare rates are restructured, leaving some families better off than others.

Later this year, ISAC ends its Hands Off! Campaign to focus on pushing for increases to the OCB for families and to OW and ODSP incomes for all.

**Campaign Statement on what "Ending the NCBS Clawback" means**



A number of organizations are calling for the end of the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS). However, not all approaches to ending the clawback will put the full amount of the NCBS back in the pockets of families on social assistance. This document clarifies the position of the Hands Off! Campaign.

**What is the National Child Benefit Supplement?**

The National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) was introduced in 1998 to prevent and reduce child poverty in Canada. The NCBS is part of the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) and gives the lowest income families up to \$162/month for each child under 18 years of age. (For more information, see *Background - The National Child Benefit Supplement*, available at [www.handsoffnow.ca](http://www.handsoffnow.ca).)

**What is the 'clawback'?**

When the NCBS was negotiated between the provinces, territories, First Nations and the federal government, it was agreed that the NCBS would be clawed back from families on social assistance. Deducting the NCBS from families on social assistance ensures low-income families are almost always financially better off with paid work than receiving social assistance. The design of the NCBS assumes that people on social assistance simply need to be given adequate 'incentives' to find paid work. The barriers to employment such as discrimination, family responsibilities, disability and the lack of decent jobs are essentially ignored. The clawback implies being on social assistance is a matter of personal choice, rather than circumstance.

All of the provinces and territories, with the exceptions of Manitoba and New Brunswick, clawback the NCBS in some way from people receiving social assistance. In Ontario, the provincial government claws back the NCBS by reducing social assistance benefits by approximately 75% of the NCBS payment. The money that is clawed back from families on social assistance is used to fund programs for low-income families such as the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families as well as municipally-based programs and programs run by First Nations.

August 2006  
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*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

- Margaret Mead

## ODSP Action Coalition

The Coalition takes a huge step forward in the partnership between ODSP recipients, clinics, advocacy groups and agencies.

Emerging out of a Caucus at the Coalition's two-day forum, ODSP recipients establish their leadership role as several recommendations, including co-chairing all committees and ensuring at least 50% of Steering Committee members are recipients, are adopted. This model continues today.

ISAC continues to provide support to the Coalition's committees and to recipients.

The Coalition continues to be a leading voice on ODSP, earning respect from government as well as clinics, agencies and ODSP recipients.

## Poverty Reduction: It Starts with a Plan

Inspired by Europe and Quebec, ISAC works with Campaign 2000, Citizens for Public Justice, the City of Toronto, the Atkinson Foundation, and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, to call for a Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario. With a fall provincial election looming, ISAC and partners build a new coalition that lobbies all political parties to adopt poverty reduction in their platforms.



The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction hosts its first press conference in September. The Liberals pledge to "build a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy around the Ontario Child Benefit" and "develop indicators and targets to measure and address child poverty". A new era of anti-poverty advocacy and organizing has begun.