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EARLY IDENTIFICATION, DIAGNOSIS and TREATMENT of AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

the number of school-aged children with autism spectrum disorder is increasing and school boards across Canada are struggling to meet their needs for special programs and personal teaching assistants; and

Whereas 2 research shows that early intervention is critical in achieving the best possible results in treating autism spectrum disorder; and

Whereas 3 waiting times for an assessment and diagnosis are twelve to fifteen months followed by a minimum two year wait for government funded intensive therapy (IBI) and

Whereas 4 some parents in Canada are losing their homes, and grandparents forced to delay retirement to help pay for private treatment for their children, while other young children have no possibility of obtaining early treatment at all as their parents simply do not have the resources; and

Whereas 5 when treatment is started late, taxpayers will pay more in education programs, medical expenses and for the ongoing care of the autistic adult; and

Whereas 6 a very simple, inexpensive identification tool, a has been developed and used successfully in identifying high risk infants; therefore be it

Resolved 1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy the support for a national strategy of early identification, diagnosis and treatment of infants with signs of autism spectrum disorder; and be it further

Resolved 2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to provide funding for:

- a. early assessment and diagnosis of all infants for autism spectrum disorder, and
- b. early intervention programs for those infants/toddlers not meeting the developmental milestones.