

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

Working for a publicly funded, non-profit child care system that is high quality, affordable, accessible and accountable.

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Minister Reid - Resign!

Minister Taylor - Restore the Cuts!

Premier Campbell - Build a Child Care System!

On January 5, 2007, Minister Linda Reid, BC's Minister of State for Child Care announced her government's latest attack on working families in BC. In spite of over \$2 billion in projected provincial surpluses, Minister Reid announced \$35 - \$40 million in cuts to BC's already under funded and fragile child care services. Reductions will be phased-in between April and October 2007 and include:

1. As of July 1, 2007 a **27% reduction in Child Care Operating Funding** for children from birth to six years of age in licensed group and family child care services.
2. By October 1, 2007 a **77% reduction in funding for Child Care Resource and Referral Programs (CCRRs)** that provide parent information about child care options in communities, assist parents to apply for Child Care Subsidies, recruit family child care providers, and support quality in child care services.
3. A **'freeze' on major child care capital funding** for a 'saving' of \$7 million.
4. A **'cap' on access to Child Care Operating Funds** for most new child care spaces.

The impacts to children, families and communities are not hard to predict.

1. **Parent fees will go up** to cover the cuts to Child Care Operating Funds and quality child care will be out of reach for even more BC families.
2. **Fewer children from low income families will be in licensed care** as their parents are left to struggle on their own with the cumbersome child care subsidy application process.
3. **Wait lists will grow and more children will be in care of unknown quality** as the development of new licensed spaces grinds to a halt.
4. **Quality will be eroded** because Child Care Resource and Referral Programs, as we know them, will disappear and caregivers will no longer have local access to training, toy/equipment lending libraries and other supports.

Minister Reid and her government blame the cuts on the federal government's decision to cancel the Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care as of March 31, 2007. **But it's time for Minister Reid and her government to take responsibility for their own actions!**

Since coming to power in 2001, the provincial Liberal government has:

- ✓ Cut over \$40 million from its own annual spending on child care.
- ✓ Used \$289 million from the federal government for early childhood development on 'anything and everything but child care'.
- ✓ Developed no plan for using hundreds of millions of federal dollars received through the Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (ELCC) to build a child care system.
- ✓ Used the first 2 years' money under the ELCC Agreement to replace provincial cuts and on a series of 'one time only' expenditures that did not build a system.
- ✓ Been silent on the federal government's decision to cancel the final 3 years of the ELCC Agreement at a total cost of \$455 million in transfer payments to BC.

Minister Reid says families can use the \$100 taxable family allowance from the federal government to pay higher child care fees. But families using child care already pay thousands of dollars a year in user fees. Currently, families pay little or no fees for other important publicly funded programs like family resource centres, parenting programs, libraries, parks and new Strong Start programs the province is funding in schools across BC. Yet, working families now have to pay more – not less – to get their children off to a strong start!

Government can't even point to a deficit to excuse the child care cuts as projections of BC's surplus grow daily. BC has the money to restore these cuts and to invest in building the child care system children, families and communities need. All that's missing is political will.

Enough is enough!

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC has 3 clear messages for this government:

1. **Minister Reid** - it's time to take responsibility for the crisis in child care and resign.
2. **Minister Taylor** - it's time to fully restore the recently announced child care cuts in the upcoming 2007/08 provincial budget and to add additional child care funds into your 3 year financial plans for system-building.
3. **Premier Campbell** - it's time to make a commitment to build the quality child care system that children, families and communities need.

We are hearing from many angry and concerned people across BC who are speaking out and taking actions in their communities and networks. This is the kind of grassroots mobilization we need to defend working families and their children in BC, so let's keep it up!

Here's what we can do together:

- ✓ Include the 3 messages of "**Resign, Restore and Build the System**" in everything you do.
- ✓ **On Feb. 6, 2007** - the first anniversary of Stephen Harper's swearing in - **take action! Wear black or a black armband all day.** Plan creative, innovative, visible actions in communities across BC. Make the cuts to child care visible.

And, stay tuned to www.cccabc.bc.ca for information and updates as the campaign evolves.