

# Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

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

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## **LEFTOVERS DUE TO THE LACK OF A CHILD CARE PLAN?**

## **LARGESSE LEADING UP TO THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION?**

**February 2005**

On February 11 Ken Dryden will meet with his provincial and territorial counterparts in Vancouver to negotiate a new child care agreement. If Minister Dryden needs any further evidence that this agreement must hold provinces accountable for using federal funds to build a child care system, he need look no further than BC.

Over the last four years, BC has received close to \$250 million from the federal government for early childhood development, including child care. Yet, BC cut its own child care budget in each of the last three years. The provincial contribution for this year alone is \$42 million, or 20%, less than it was in 2001/02.

These cuts hurt children, families, providers and services. We have repeatedly called on the province to:

- ✓ Restore provincial funding levels to 2001/02;
- ✓ Use federal funds to supplement rather than replace provincial cuts;
- ✓ Develop and implement a 5 year plan to build a quality, publicly funded child care system.

To date, BC has confirmed that \$9 million in federal funds for 2004/05 will begin to replace provincial cuts. Now, as the end of the fiscal year approaches, BC is announcing a number of one-time funding initiatives. As the following table shows, over \$8.5 million in last minute spending has been announced since November 2004.

The province says that the funding for these initiatives is jointly provided through the Federal/Provincial Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the Ministry of Children and Family Development's (MCFD) 2004/05 child care budget. However, government is unable or unwilling to say how much is coming from federal transfers and how much from the widely acknowledged unspent provincial budget.

Given the hardships many families and child care services face, the child care community will use whatever funds are available to try to meet community needs. Volunteers will turn around funding applications on tight timelines for relatively small pots of money. But, clearly this is NOT the way to build a system.

Why would a government that purports to care about efficient use of tax dollars pour significant funds into one-time quick spending initiatives that are disconnected from any evidence-based plan for promoting quality, accessibility, stability, or accountability? Well, there are a number of likely reasons:

- ✓ In spite of 4 years in office and an abundance of research, this government still has no coherent child care policy or plan and really doesn't know how best to spend on child care.
- ✓ Given the damage funding cuts have made to the child care infrastructure, once again BC has been unable to spend its own child care budget.
- ✓ BC's record of taking significant federal funds intended to improve child care while actually dismantling child care will be a political embarrassment at the February 11 federal/provincial/territorial meetings being held in Vancouver.
- ✓ The government knows that it is vulnerable with women voters and is trying to look like it cares about child care in the lead up to the May election.

Whatever the reasons, BC's children and families deserve better. Parents have spent the last two decades encouraging the federal government to take a leadership role in building a child care system that works for all of Canada's children. They do not want to see it squandered by incompetence and election politics.

**Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (February, 2005)**  
**ONE-TIME ONLY**  
**Child Care Allocations by the Province of BC**  
**November 2004 – March 2005.**

| <b>Date</b>                 | <b>Amount (millions)</b> | <b>Activity to which one-time only funding has been directed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development</b>   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| October 2004 <sup>1</sup>   | \$4.45 M                 | <p><b>Transition Funding</b> - a one-time payment to providers who currently receive the Child Care Operating Fund. This funding is based on a 'per licensed space' rate established for each type of care. Government describes the payment as a transition to new subsidy rates which is intended to assist in the operation of the child care program.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>No application process. Service providers reported that cheques just turned up in December. Providers didn't know what it was to be used for. No spending guidelines, no reporting requirements, no accountability. Two reported examples (rounded):</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>\$ 300 for a family daycare ( Number of spaces unknown).</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>\$5,000 for a centre licensed for various programs and serving 80 children. 0–12 years, full and/or part-time</i></p> |
|                             | \$0.50 M                 | <p>To establish a professional development fund.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>No details provided. May also be a component of the announcement made in February 2005.</i></p>  |
| December, 2004 <sup>2</sup> | \$0.795 M                | <p>One-time-only funding directed to 38 <b>Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR)</b> programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ \$400,000 for equipment and resources;</li> <li>▪ \$200,000 for computer equipment;</li> <li>▪ \$100,000 for start-up costs “to be used to remove financial barriers for those providers who are becoming a registered Licence Not Required or a licensed family provider.”</li> <li>▪ \$95,000 for CCRR promotion</li> </ul> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>There appear to have been other one-time initiatives (amounts unknown) over and above these allocations as well as one-time transfers of unknown amounts to the Health Authorities for licensing activities.</i></p>  |
| December 2004 <sup>3</sup>  | Unknown                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Minor Capital Funding for Emergency Repair, Replacement and Relocation</b> - On a one-time-only basis, until March 31, 2005, eligible licensed group child care facilities may apply twice during this fiscal year period - once for Minor Capital Funding in the amount of \$4,000, and once for Minor Capital Funding in the amount of \$10,000. Applications will be received and processed on a first come, first serve basis. Final application deadline date is March 15, 2005.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>Total amount of one-time only money available for this initiative has not been made public.</i></p>  |

<sup>1</sup> MCFD News Release 26/10/04 [http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm\\_news\\_releases/2004MCF0026-000889.htm](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm_news_releases/2004MCF0026-000889.htm)

<sup>2</sup> MCFD email communiqué to CCRR programs.

<sup>3</sup> MCFD Website <http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/providers.htm#minor>

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|----------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <p>January 2005<sup>4</sup></p>  | <p>Unknown</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Safe Play Space Program:</b> Funding of up to \$25,000 per facility is available to: replace or upgrade outdoor play equipment and/or ground cover/surfacing to meet CSA standards; and, to cover costs for a qualified installer to ensure that the project will meet CSA standards. Eligible licensed group child care facilities may apply for Safe Play Space Program funding once in this fiscal year ending March 31, 2005. Those providers who have already received minor or major capital funding in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005, are still eligible to receive funding under the Safe Play Space Program.</li> </ul> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>The Ministry’s website calls this “a new initiative” so it may recur. Total amount of money available for this initiative from the 2004/05 child care budget allocation has not been made public.</i></p>   |
|                                  | <p>\$1.58 M</p> | <p><b>Supported Child Development Program:</b> Transition funds to be spent by the community organizations providing the service by March 31, 2005.</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>No information on spending guidelines, reporting requirements or accountability process.</i></p>   |
| <p>February 2005<sup>5</sup></p> | <p>\$1.50 M</p> | <p>First come, first serve, one-time funding to aboriginal and multicultural agencies, eligible early childhood education students and organizations that train child care providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Child Care Provider Professional Development &amp; Training Fund:</b> A time-limited funding program to assist organizations to host training activities for child care providers. Up to \$25,000 per activity to non-profit organizations, First Nations, local governments and public institutions toward professional development workshops and training for child care providers.</li> <li>• <b>Child Care in Multicultural &amp; Aboriginal Communities Fund:</b> A time-limited funding program to promote increased awareness and accessibility of child care programs in multicultural and aboriginal communities. Up to \$25,000 to promote increased awareness and develop child care resources and communicate culturally relevant information in aboriginal and multicultural communities.</li> <li>• <b>BC Early Childhood Education Bursary:</b> A time-limited award to assist eligible students currently enrolled in early childhood education programs at recognized educational institutions. Bursaries of up to \$200 per eligible course for eligible post-secondary students enrolled in recognized early childhood education programs.</li> <li>• \$70,000 to be used for the creation, translation and distribution of child care information and materials</li> </ul> <p><b>Comment:</b> <i>Two of these initiatives may be a component of the previously announced “professional development fund”. It is unclear if this allocation is an additional \$1.50 million of one-time only money or if it is made up in part by the \$0.50 million announced for a professional development fund in October 2004.</i></p> |

<sup>4</sup> MCFD Website [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/safe\\_play.htm](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/ChildCar/safe_play.htm)

<sup>5</sup> MCFD Press Release 4/02/05 [http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm\\_news\\_releases/2005MCF0002-000109.pdf](http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/nrm_news_releases/2005MCF0002-000109.pdf)