

# Child Care Advocacy Forum

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## **Participating Organizations:**

BC Association of  
Child Care Services

Coalition of Child  
Care Advocates of BC

Early Childhood  
Educators of BC

School Age Child  
Care Association

Westcoast Child Care  
Resource Centre

Western Canada Family  
Child Care Association  
of BC

Funding and Support  
provided by:

Status of Women Canada  
- BC/Yukon Region  
through Coalition of  
Child Care Advocates of  
BC

## **Focus on Federal Funds**

In September 2000, BC and 9 other provinces signed an Agreement on Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services with the federal government. Under this Agreement, Ottawa will transfer \$2 billion over 5 years to provinces and territories to support early childhood development programs and services. The provinces and territories will track and report on their use of the funds.

Through BC's First Call Child & Youth Advocacy Coalition ([www.firstcallbc.org](http://www.firstcallbc.org)), community advocates across the province have reached consensus on how our province should spend its share of these federal funds. *The First Call Position on Early Childhood Development* identifies 4 key elements of an Early Childhood Strategy for BC: Healthy Babies; Family Services and Supports; Child Care; Special Services For Children. Based on the estimated numbers of children and families served by each of these service areas, First Call urges government to spend 2/3 of the ECDI funds on child care and 1/3 on the other three areas.

For this current fiscal year (2001/2002), BC has received \$39 million. The previous provincial government had adopted First Call's position with \$26 million allocated for child care and \$13 million for the other services. As best we can determine, close to \$11 million of the funds allocated for child care have been spent. We also know that with the repeal of Child Care BC, the remaining \$15 million that would have been spent on Infant-Toddler care is up for reallocation. Of the \$13 million allocated for other services, it seems that \$8 million is being spent on the Aboriginal Early Childhood Development Initiative and the rest remains uncommitted.

For the next fiscal year (2002/2003) BC will receive \$51 million in ECDI funds. At a September 13 meeting of First Call, the Honourable Linda Reid, BC's Minister of State for Early Childhood Development, reported that discussions about how these funds are to be allocated are underway. Submissions will go to Treasury Board soon. She invited the community to offer its input on how to allocate these funds.

### **So, there is still some time – but we must act now! Here's what you can do:**

- Call or visit your MLA and let them know that:
  - You are 'watching' how the province delivers on its promises in the Agreement on Early Childhood Development Services
  - You support spending 2/3 of the funds on Child Care and 1/3 on Healthy Babies; Family Services and Supports and Special Services for Children.

- Send the same message to:

Premier Gordon Campbell:

Fax: (250)387-0087      Email: [premier@gov.bc.ca](mailto:premier@gov.bc.ca)

Minister of State Reid:

Fax: (250)356-8337      Email: [Linda.Reid@gems1.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Linda.Reid@gems1.gov.bc.ca)

Minister of State Stephens:

Fax: (250)387-4312      Email: [Melissa.Safarik@gems6.gov.bc.ca](mailto:Melissa.Safarik@gems6.gov.bc.ca)

Given BC's worsening economic state, the federal ECD funds may be all we have to work with next year. Let's make sure that they are used to make a difference for as many families and children as possible.