

*Excerpts from
Advocacy Forum's Implementation Plan for
B.C.'s Publicly Funded Child Care system
May, 2000*

Guiding Principles for Transition Period

The Advocacy Forum recognizes that there will be many challenges during the transition period from the old system to the new one. While we can anticipate some of the implementation issues, other issues will emerge during the process. In order to ensure a consistent approach to implementation, the Child Care Advocacy Forum has adopted the following Guiding Principles.

The following Principles should guide a 5-year implementation process

- **Entitlement for children and families** should drive implementation.
- Every step must **lead towards the long term vision**.
- Implementation should build on **existing strengths** in the system
- New policies and procedures should be as **simple** as possible.
- Appropriate levels of **accountability** should be built into the system.
- Implementation **cannot compromise** and should **enhance quality and inclusive practice**.
- Government must **commit the staffing and resources** necessary to effectively implement change.
- The **level of public funding** provided to support each child care space needs to take into account the **actual costs** of supporting quality and **regional differences**.
- Services in the 'publicly funded system' must **not be able to charge more than the provincially established parent fee**. (Others can choose to operate legally outside the system and establish their own fees)
- Child care services not yet included in the publicly funded system should **continue to access current provincial child care funding programs** during the transition period
- Government must regularly review and **test its planning assumptions**

The following Principles are particularly relevant to the implementation of Phase 1 (school-based, school aged child care spaces) and should be used to guide the use of the additional child care dollars provided in the 2000/01 provincial budget.

Phase 1 needs to be a **model** for the rest of the system.

- Implementation should **extend entitlement to children in existing spaces** before creating new spaces.
- **Extending entitlement** to all children should **take priority** over meeting other needs in the system.

- **All currently operating, licensed school-based, school-aged child care services** that are prepared to meet accountability requirements should be **invited to participate** in the publicly funded system.

In addition to these Guiding Principles, there are 2 key pieces of work that government needs to undertake to support successful implementation and ensure effective use of public funds:

1. Develop and communicate **a 5 year incremental plan** with time lines, targets and adequate financial resources leading to a publicly funded child care system that entitles all children to access quality child care services.

NOTE: The development of this plan must begin immediately and cannot be postponed until after the implementation of Phase 1 for two reasons:

- *If Phase 1 is to be a 'model' for the rest of the system, then we need to know where we are headed.*
- *While inequities are inevitable during a Transition Period, families and service providers will be able to accept inequities more readily if they know that their turn will come.*

2. Develop and provide resources for community based **child care infrastructure** that:
 - supports rational planning and development
 - provides effective management and administration of child care services
 - supports movement of unregulated care into the regulated sector (through licensing and/or registration with a Child Care Resource and Referral Program [CCRR])
 - coordinates key child care related functions licensing, training, CCRRs, etc.