

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 Aged
Child Care
Association

Westcoast Child
Care Resource
Centre

Western Canada
Family Child
Care Association
of BC

Please Share this Package with Colleagues and Friends

99-09-03

Dear Members and Supporters,

Over the summer, developments affecting child care at the provincial and federal level continued to receive a lot of public and media attention. The Child Care Advocacy Forum met in late August to plan for our Fall activities. We paid particular attention to two developments that have a direct impact on how we advance our "Common Agenda and Vision for Child Care Services in B.C." (attached)

- In late July, provincial responsibility for child care was moved from the Ministry for Children and Families into the new Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security. Moe Sihota is now the Minister responsible for child care policies and programs in B.C. The Child Care Advocacy Forum issued a media release on July 22 (attached) in which we expressed 'cautious optimism' about the new home for child care. It is our analysis that the move may well signal the provincial government's intent to 'move on the child care file'. We think there may be a renewed opportunity to work towards a publicly funded child care system in B.C. and have indicated to government that, if they are committed to developing a comprehensive system of child care, we are ready and willing to work with them. As a first step, we are seeking a meeting with Minister Sihota to present our Vision and Agenda and hear about his intentions.
- Discussions about the next federal budget have started to heat up. The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada and its partners have launched the "Children Can't Wait" campaign to ensure that the next federal budget is a Children's Budget (attached). But, media reports of the summer's Premier's Conference and the Liberal Party's caucus meeting make it clear that there is still no consensus amongst politicians about the need to invest in children.

These developments indicate that, while there are renewed opportunities for progress at the provincial and federal levels, change will only occur if there is informed support at the community level. We concluded that **now is the time to focus public and political attention on a positive vision for child care**. So, we are urging you to join us in a province wide campaign - "**Voicing the Child Care Vision**". Over a two week period, from **October 1 - 15**, we are asking communities across the province to plan activities and events that raise the profile of the "Common Agenda and Vision for Child Care Services in B.C." with the public and with politicians at the provincial and federal levels.

The attached package includes suggestions for a range of possible community activities and print materials that we hope will be helpful. Please feel free to copy any or all of these materials as handouts for the press, participants in your community event and others who may be interested. If you need more copies, please call Carol Anderson at Westcoast at (604) 709-5661.

It is very important for us to be able to share information about what is happening across the province with others. We have included a Community Response Form, which we hope you will complete and return as soon as possible.

Here's to a successful campaign.

Rita Chudnovsky - on behalf of the Child Care Advocacy Forum