

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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Participating Organizations

BC Association of
Child Care Employers

Coalition of Child Care
Advocates of BC

Early Childhood
Educators of BC

School Age Child Care
Association of BC

Westcoast Child Care
Resource Centre

Western Canada
Family Child Care
Association of BC

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A Summary of BC Child Care Cuts and Impacts

January 2007

On January 5, 2007 Linda Reid, BC's Minister of State for Child Care, announced devastating cuts to BC child care programs. Over 9 months beginning April 1, 2007 a total of \$35 – \$40 million will be cut with the following impacts.

CUT – 27% less for Child Care Operating Funds (CCOF) for children under 6.

IMPACT – Parent fees will rise. Fewer families will be able to afford quality care.

CCOF provides relatively small but critically important operating grants to licensed group and family child care programs for every enrolled child. After drastically reducing direct operating funds to child care in 2002, CCOF rates were marginally increased for children under the age of 6 in September 2005. The government fully expects the cost of these cuts to be made up through increases in parent fees.

CUT – 78% less for Child Care Resource and Referral Programs (CCRR).

IMPACT – CCRRs as communities know them will cease to exist.

CCRRs are the public face of child care in communities across BC. They provide parents with referrals to child care programs, they help families apply for Child Care Subsidies, they recruit and support caregivers to improve quality through outreach and training and they provide information about child care to the community at large. The cut in annual funding from \$14 to \$3 million a year cannot even begin to cover these services. The loss of CCRRs services at the local level will negatively impact subsidy uptake.

CUT – Major Child Care Capital Funding stopped.

IMPACT – No new child care spaces will be built. Wait lists will get longer.

Major capital child care funding from the province covers a portion of the total capital budget required to create new spaces. Community organizations already need to raise additional capital funds to create new spaces. In 2004, there was a licensed child care space for only 13% of children from birth to twelve years of age and a recent survey of some BC child care programs indicates wait lists of up to 2 years for existing services. A cut of \$7 million in major capital funding means that the shortage will only get worse.

CUT – An 'intake cap' on access to CCOF for new spaces.

IMPACT – New child care spaces will be more expensive and less sustainable.

Even if communities find capital dollars to create child care spaces, they cannot count on CCOF grants to offset parent fees. This will be another disincentive for expansion of licensed spaces. Any new spaces that are created will have fees that only the most affluent families can afford - the very opposite impact of government's stated intention to ensure the needs of vulnerable families are met.

At the same time as government is cutting sustaining child care funding they are wasting dollars that could build a real child care system.

WASTE – \$40 million on undefined one-time-only 'quality' improvements.

IMPACT – BC will move unspent federal child care funds off their books by March 31. The only criteria will be that the funds ARE NOT USED TO MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE.

WASTE – An unknown amount to 'buy out' CCRR leases and cover layoff costs.

IMPACT – While children wait for quality care, parents pay ever-rising fees, and early childhood educators lose their jobs – government will spend dedicated child care dollars to shut programs down. And there are many more millions of federal child care dollars that the province has yet to account for!

For more information see

www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/2007/Financial_FS_Jan_07_Final_2.pdf and the BC Child Care Advocacy Forum website at www.advocacyforum.bc.ca