

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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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

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BC Families and Kids Need Comprehensive Child Care Program Now!

On January 8th, 2001, Premier Ujjal Dosanjh and Minister Mike Farnworth unveiled plans to make licensed child care affordable for BC parents. Building on its school age child care initiative that began earlier this month, Government announced that parents whose children attend licensed group and family child care will pay no more than \$14 per day for all-day care by 2004.

According to Susan Harney who chairs the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, "We applaud the Government's commitment to children of all ages in a range of child care and preschool programs. Research and our own experiences tell us that this is the right thing to do for children, families and communities. Over the past eighteen months, British Columbians have clearly indicated that child care must be a top priority for action. This plan responds to the thousands of parents, caregivers and concerns citizens who sent that message to Government."

A growing body of research demonstrates that public investment in the early years, including child care services, benefits everyone. Children who receive good care in their early years do better at school, are less likely to engage in risky behaviours, and are more likely to be employed as adults. Canadian economists have calculated that, for every \$1 invested in quality comprehensive child care services, there is a \$2 return down the road.

Dianne Liscumb, Executive Director of Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre, commented, "We know that public investment in a comprehensive child care system makes good sense. And we know that British Columbians are willing to support that investment. But, there is the rub, phase two of the Child Care BC plan will not begin for another full year."

Phase two of the Child Care BC initiative covers infant and toddler care, and school age care in licensed family child care facilities. Its implementation is scheduled for January 2002. Infant and toddler care is generally considered to be at a crisis stage for both service providers and parents, with fees reaching \$800-\$1,000 per month.

In response to the Government's recent announcement, the Child Care Advocacy Forum is calling on:

1. Premier Dosanjh to move up the implementation of the next phase of Child Care BC to April 1st, 2001;
2. The Official Opposition to lend its support to the timely implementation of a comprehensive publicly funded child care system that meets the needs of all BC children.

Ms Harney added, "There is no excuse for delay. Many infant-toddler programs will not survive another year without public funding. As we have said before – our children can't wait!"