

Child Care Advocacy Forum

#300-210 W Broadway
Vancouver, BC
V5Y 3W2

Tel:
(604) 515-6257
Toll-free:
1-877-361-1116
Fax:
(604) 709-5662

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

This is one in a series of fact sheets outlining the importance of regulated child care to the people of BC. It was prepared by the Child Care Advocacy Forum, an alliance of six provincial child care organizations committed to developing a publicly funded, comprehensive child care system. If you would like to receive other fact sheets or for more information, please contact the Child Care Advocacy Forum.

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From Common Sense to Public Dollars

Child care makes important contributions to society. This fact sheet explains why it makes good sense to develop a comprehensive child care system with a range of service options and fund it predominantly with public dollars.

- **Only a comprehensive child care system supported by public dollars can ensure that ALL British Columbian children and families have access to regulated child care.**

Currently, BC child care services are funded privately through parent fees (total: \$1.35 BILLION annually), with some government support for wages, low income parents, repairs to facilities and purchase of equipment (total: \$188 million).

Many parents cannot afford the fees for high quality, regulated child care programs. "Working poor" parents who are ineligible for child care subsidy but lack available income are particularly hard hit. Public funding would ensure equal access to quality services for all British Columbian children and families, and would stabilize child care organizations.

- **A publicly funded, comprehensive child care system would create benefits for all of us, whether or not we have children and whether or not we use the services.**

In their publication, *The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care* (1998), Cleveland and Krashinsky conclude that if we offered child care to all Canadian children aged two to five, the immediate benefit to our economy would equal \$6,240,000. This includes greater employability for parents, higher income earned and taxes paid by parents, and savings to the social welfare system.

The economic benefit projected for the children would equal \$4,308,000, based on improved chances for future academic and professional success.

For society, the benefits would appear in greater tax revenues and savings to the social welfare system. In the long run, a comprehensive child care system would offer a \$2 return to children, parents and society for every dollar invested.

- **Public support for a comprehensive child care system through funding, but not through tax cuts, makes sense.**

The argument that tax cuts would provide parents with financial relief ignores the fact that low income parents most in need would reap little if any benefit. Full-time child care typically costs more than \$5,000 per year, and often much more for children under age 3. For parents at any income level to offset the cost of child care, huge tax cuts would be needed!

Canada now has a federal surplus, and a clear understanding of child care's economic and developmental benefits. Common sense says that a cooperatively built children's agenda must recognize the role of high quality child care in creating efficiencies in the education and service sectors as children develop to their fullest potential. Public dollars will help make that happen.

Child Care – The Place to Start