



Child Care BC is now the law!

On March 29, 2001, the Government of BC proclaimed Bill 2 – the Child Care BC Act. The information below explains what this means for families, service providers and communities, and where the main political parties stand on this new legislation.

What does Bill 2 say?

Bill 2 outlines the Child Care BC Act, which covers all aspects of the Child Care BC Plan first announced in January 2001. This includes the school aged child care Funding Assistance Program launched in January 2001, as well as funding for family child care and other centre-based child care programs scheduled to begin in January 2002. The bill also creates the BC Benefits (Child Care Subsidy) Act to deal with child care subsidies. Bill 2 includes a schedule of required funding for each year, beginning with \$127 million in 2001/2002 and ending with \$480 million in 2004/05. The full text of the bill is available on-line at <http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/> and we have provided some highlights of the bill at the end of this information sheet.

What does the legislation mean?

This legislation means that Child Care BC is now the law in our province. If a future government decides not to move forward on Child Care BC, it will have to **repeal or amend the legislation**.

Where do the main political parties stand on Bill 2?

The NDP Government introduced this legislation and voted for it. Bill 2 passed and became law on March 29, 2001. We expect that the NDP will continue to support this initiative and new legislation during the provincial election campaign.

The Liberal Opposition voted against Section 4(b) through (f) (see over for details), although they supported other parts of Bill 2. The Liberals say that they will maintain the aspects of Child Care BC already in place (i.e., school aged and kindercare in licensed group programs), but are not committed to implementing the rest of the four-year plan outlined in the Bill.

What does the Child Care Advocacy Forum think about Bill 2 and the Child Care BC Act?

We believe that Bill 2 is a significant and historic development. For the first time, children and families in BC have a legislative entitlement to affordable, licensed child care. We support this legislation and will work hard during and after the provincial election campaign to ensure that it is honoured and strengthened. We know that the Child Care BC Act does not answer all of the needs of the child care system. There is still much work to do to ensure that:

- ✓ a comprehensive range of our services is available,
- ✓ services are of the highest possible quality,
- ✓ caregivers are adequately paid for their work,
- ✓ training options are available, and
- ✓ we have a strong administrative infrastructure for child care.

What can you do about Bill 2?

We expect that the debate on child care in the provincial election campaign will now focus on whether or not candidates support the Child Care BC Act. The material in the Child Care Advocacy Forum's

Provincial Election Child Care Package is still very relevant. The Talking Points in that package cover the major criticisms of Bill 2 and Child Care BC that you can expect to hear.

But, it is important that you ask all of your candidates where they stand on Bill 2 – so here is one more introductory comment and some additional questions to add to your list.

On March 29, 2001, the Child Care BC Act was proclaimed. This Act enshrines a four-year plan to make publicly funded child care available to families at a maximum cost of \$14 a day for full-time care and outlines a timeline for bringing all licensed group and family programs into the system.



If elected, will you support full implementation of Bill 2 – the Child Care BC Act? If not, why not? How will you ensure affordable, quality child care services for all families and children?

Highlights of Bill 2 – the Child Care BC Act

Section 2:

Enshrines the Provincial Child Care Council as the body that will advise the Minister responsible for the Child Care BC Act and the BC Benefits (Child Care Subsidy) Act.

Section 3:

Enshrines the Funding Assistance Program and requires that, for each fiscal year, Government set the funding to be allocated to that Program. It also enshrines affordability of child care by stating that:

The maximum fees that a child care provider may require a parent to pay to the child care provider are the sum of the basic parent fee...up to a maximum of \$14 per day per child, and the additional permitted fees for specified services and expenses as set out in a written agreement between the minister and the child care provider.

Section 4:

Outlines a timeline for extending public funding to 85,000 child care spaces in programs licensed under the Community Care Facilities Act as follows:

- (a) On this Act coming into force, up to 21,000 spaces for children enrolled during the school year in an out of school (licensed) group program...*
- (b) Effective January 2, 2002, for (i) up to 7,000 spaces for kindergarten and school age children enrolled during the school year in a family child care program... and (ii) up to 4,680 spaces for children under age 36 months enrolled in a group day care under 36 months program...*
- (c) Effective on September 3, 2002, for up to 17,000 spaces for children up to school age enrolled in a family child care program...*
- (d) Effective on July 2, 2003, for up to the total number of spaces referred to in paragraphs (a) and (b), (i) for children enrolled, during school summer break periods, in a (licensed) group or family out of school child care program...*
- (e) Effective on September 1, 2003, for up to 16,560 spaces for children, (i) age 30 months and up, and (ii) who have not yet entered grade 1 enrolled in a group day care 30 months to school age program...*
- (f) Effective on January 4, 2004, for up to 18,720 spaces for children enrolled in a preschool 30 months to school age program...*

This material was prepared by the Child Care Advocacy Forum in April 2001. The Child Care Advocacy Forum is an alliance of six provincial child care 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 and Western Canada Family Child Care Association of BC.