

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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Participating Organizations:

BC Association of
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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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Provincial survey of child care programs raises the question – Where are the children?

In the fall of 2002, over 700 child care providers from across BC participated in a survey about the impact of cuts to provincial child care funding.

The picture they painted is troubling indeed!

- ✓ 57% have fewer subsidized children in their program
- ✓ 49% have decreased enrolment
- ✓ 42% have decreased waitlists
- ✓ 31% have increased their fees
- ✓ 19% report that they may close their doors in the near future
- ✓ 52% are concerned about their future viability

"Most of the child care programs who have lost children blame provincial cuts to the child care subsidy program", says Darcelle Cottons, from the BC Association of Child Care Services. "It's low and moderate income families who have to withdraw their children because they can't afford to pay for quality care. But, where are their children now?"

Survey respondents have some troubling answers. They report that very young school-aged children are being left on their own and that parents of pre-school children have no choice but to use unlicensed, informal child care arrangements.

"But, the research is clear", says Susan Harney of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. "Licensing and regulation support high quality child care and high quality child care supports healthy childhood development. This government is creating a two-tiered system. High quality care for the children of families who can afford to pay and underground care for the rest."

Sheila Davidson, Director of SFU Childcare Society, is also concerned about instability in the child care system. "It has taken us twenty years to build the current supply of licensed and regulated care in BC. And now, over half of survey respondents say they are concerned about their future. If more licensed and regulated family and group child care programs close – where will our children go?"

The Child Care Advocacy Forum, sponsors of the survey, is calling on Premier Gordon Campbell to answer the question - **Where are the children?**

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For a complete copy of the Survey Report go to www.cccabc.bc.ca and follow the links to **Where Are The Children?**

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