

**CHILD CARE ADVOCACY FORUM
RESPONSE TO
“BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR B.C. KIDS”
December, 1999**

On Oct. 21, 1999 Moe Sihota, the Minister of Social Development and Economic Security released a discussion paper on child care entitled “Building a Better Future for British Columbia’s Kids.” The discussion paper provides information on the current situation facing children, families and child care providers in B.C. and describes a range of possible options for increased provincial spending on child care.

Minister Sihota has invited British Columbians to engage in public discussion and provide advice to government on the options we prefer. While public discussion is welcome, **there is an urgent need for provincial and federal action.**

The Child Care Advocacy Forum, an alliance of six provincial child care organizations, asks you to endorse and communicate the following position to the provincial and federal governments:

1. The discussion paper sets out some first steps in addressing immediate problems of affordability, accessibility and low wages in the child care sector. While all of these options will make a difference for some families and caregivers, **they are only stop gap measures.**
2. The provincial and federal governments need to make a commitment to a publicly funded system that **entitles ALL children to affordable, quality early childhood services.**
3. Specifically we call on:
 - **The Federal Government** to make the next budget a **Children’s Budget** with a first year allocation of \$2 billion for the development of provincial and territorial systems of early childhood development services.
 - **The Provincial Government** to develop a comprehensive child care system for B.C. that moves child care from the current user fee system to one that is publicly funded. This will require:
 - public policy that, like in Quebec, entitles every child to quality child care regardless of the economic or employment status of parents
 - a significant increase in spending on child care in the next provincial budget to raise the province’s share to 50% of total child care costs in B.C.