

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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Participating Organizations

BC Association of
Child Care Employers

Coalition of Child Care
Advocates of BC

Early Childhood
Educators of BC

School Age Child Care
Association of BC

Westcoast Child Care
Resource Centre

Western Canada
Family Child Care
Association of BC

Financial and in-kind
support is provided by
Vancouver Foundation,
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Foundation and the
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VANCOUVER
FOUNDATION

Premier Gordon Campbell
PO Box 9041
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC
V8W 9E1

April 2007

Dear Premier Campbell,

It is with a troubling sense of foreboding that 5 organizational members of the BC Child Care Advocacy Forum are writing to express our disbelief at the recent, arbitrary and totally unnecessary cuts your government is making to the provincial services offered by our sister organization – Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre.

For 20 years, Westcoast has played a vital role in the child care community in BC. Yet, seemingly at the drop of a hat, the results of two decades of hard work and exemplary service at the provincial level will vanish as of April 30, 2007.

- The largest early childhood education and child care related library in Western Canada – gone.
- Diversity resources and training to promote inclusive culturally appropriate child care – gone.
- Financial and administrative resources and training for providers and organizations across BC – gone.
- Accurate, up-to-date responses to questions about child care from parents, caregivers, the public, and governments – gone.

You were a strong public supporter of Westcoast during its early years so you know what the loss of these services means for parents, providers and the community at large. The decision to cut \$800,000 in provincial services delivered by Westcoast is one more example of ill conceived, last minute decisions that plague your government's child care branch. If after 20 years of providing valuable service, an organization like Westcoast can be given 6 weeks notice to shut down its provincial services without any warning, without any review of the value of its services, without any opportunity to discuss the decision, without any transparent or accountable process – then no child care service in BC is safe.

Your government's inability or unwillingness to implement a plan that builds a child care system is wreaking havoc in communities. One day, cuts are made to funds that sustain child care programs. The next, millions are spent on one time only expenditures that don't build a system. In January, we are told that federal funds have to be spent by fiscal year end. March 31 comes and goes with no public accounting for millions of federal child care dollars still on the table. All the while, children, families and providers are left to hold it together as best they can.

All of this would be less heartbreaking if it weren't so unnecessary. BC has a healthy surplus and can afford to invest in our children. And, Minister Solberg, the federal minister responsible for child care, has said that it's up to the provinces to decide how to spend child care funds from the 2007/08 federal budget. So, BC will receive more than enough funding to restore the recent child care cuts.

We trust you understand that what takes decades to build can be destroyed in a moment. As Premier, we are calling on you to intervene before it's too late. Make child care a priority and assure British Columbians that the chaos will end now.

Sincerely,



Susan Harney
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC



Wendy Bayard
Western Canada Family Child Care Association



Diane Tannahill
Early Childhood Educators of BC



Darcelle Cottons
BC Association of Child Care Employers



Astrid Visscher
School Age Child Care Association