

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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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 of BC

Westcoast Child Care
Resource Centre

Western Canada Family
Child Care Association
of BC

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Care Advocates of BC



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BC WORKS IF CHILD CARE WORKS Provincial Election 2005

Fact Sheet #2 - Child Care Builds Community

On May 17, British Columbians go to the polls to elect a new provincial government. After 4 years of devastating cuts to child care, this election is critical for BC children, families and care providers. If we are to turn the child care tide, every voter must understand **that BC will only work if child care works**. Here's why:

1. Publicly funded child care makes it possible for parents, particularly mothers, to work and/or study.

The contribution that mothers of young children make to our economy remains a key economic driver for public investment in child care. In 2003, 67.4% of BC mothers whose youngest child was under 2, 73.5% of BC mothers whose youngest child was 3-5 and 78.7% of BC mothers whose youngest child was 6-15 were in the paid labour force. Mothers need and choose to work and the economy would stagnate without them. For labour force participation to be productive and sustainable, families need to know that their children are well cared for by qualified staff in high quality programs. Yet, this kind of care is still not accessible or affordable for most BC families. Families should not have to choose between quality care and career or training opportunities.

2. Quality child care programs employ skilled, educated professionals who are committed to caring for society's children.

Thousands of jobs across BC are held by trained child care workers and directors. Yet, current low wages and limited career options have led to serious recruitment and retention problems. A properly funded, comprehensive child care system would ensure that qualified individuals are able to work in their field of choice and receive reasonable wages and benefits for their vital work. In fact, child care can and will stimulate local economies as wages earned by those who build and those who deliver child care are most likely to be spent close to home.

3. Publicly funded, quality child care benefits all of us, whether or not we have children and whether or not we use the services.

A 1998 cost-benefit analysis of providing child care to all Canadian children aged two to five calculated an immediate benefit to our economy of \$6,240,000 through increased parental employment, higher income and taxes paid by families and savings to the social welfare system. In the long run, the analysis indicated that a comprehensive child care system would offer a \$2 return on every public dollar we spend. (Cleveland and Krashinsky). Child care for children from birth to 12 years of age is an investment in our future, not an economic drain.

4. Child care builds community.

Quality child care brings together children from all cultures, levels of abilities and kinds of families. Through daily experiences in quality programs, children learn that they belong. They learn to value diversity, to respect differences and to solve problems peacefully. Child care is also the place where families connect with each other, build support networks and develop life long friendships. For isolated families, these connections are essential. Watch your own reaction to a group of young children playing in the park – the smiles, the friendly chats, the sense of wonderment. Isn't this the kind of community we all want to be part of?