

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

Westcoast Child
Care Resource
Centre

Western Canada
Family Child
Care Association
of BC

January 10, 2000

The Honorable Moe Sihota
Minister of Social Development and Economic Security
Parliament Buildings - Room 247
PO Box 9058, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Sihota,

As you know, the members and partners of the Child Care Advocacy Forum have been working actively to mobilize a response to your discussion paper "Building A Better Future for British Columbia's Kids". To date, you have received over 7000 responses, the vast majority of which call for a publicly funded system that entitles all children to access quality care, regardless of the economic or employment status of their families.

In addition to this mobilization, the Advocacy Forum has worked hard to extend the debate on child care. We are actively lobbying Paul Martin about the upcoming Federal Budget and are communicating with your colleague Andrew Petter about B.C.'s position at federal/provincial tables. We are organizing a broad response to Minister Ramsey's discussion paper on the upcoming Provincial Budget and are meeting with NDP caucus members in their constituencies across the province. We have successfully put 'child care' on the agenda of the NDP leadership race and all of the current candidates have publicly declared their support for action on child care.

Since assuming responsibility for child care, you have assured us that, while you will act on child care, you wanted to hear from British Columbians before making firm commitments. Recently, you extended the deadline for public consultation until February 29, 2000.

While we fully agree that all interested British Columbians must have an opportunity to participate in the debate, we are concerned that delays may undermine the opportunity to make significant progress in upcoming federal and provincial budgets. We believe that the central themes of the public response are clearly outlined in the "Interim Report on Responses to *Building A Better Future for British Columbia's Kids*" (Jan, 10, 2000). While discussions about specific implementation details are essential, these discussions will only be productive if they are based on a firm governmental commitment to a long term vision and adequate financial resources.

We are therefore seeking a meeting with you, at your earliest convenience, to discuss the next steps. We will be asking that you demonstrate leadership in responding to the central messages of the Interim Report by making firm and specific commitments to policy and funding action.

Please contact me at the numbers above to discuss possible dates and times. We look forward to your speedy response.

Sincerely,

Rita Chudnovsky - Facilitator, Child Care Advocacy Forum

cc. Sharon Manson Singer - Deputy Minister, MSDES