

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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BC Association of
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Coalition of Child
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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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CHILD CARE B.C. IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO SO... LET'S DO IT NOW!

January, 2001

On January 8, 2001 Premier Ujjal Dosanjh and Minister Mike Farnworth unveiled their plans for making all licensed child care in B.C. affordable for parents. Building on the school-aged child care initiative that began this month, the government announced that parents whose children attend licensed group and family child care will pay no more than \$14 a day for all-day care.

As of Jan. 1, 2001, families of children from kindergarten to age 12 are now paying no more than \$7 a day for before and after school care and no more than \$14 a day for kindercare and full-day care for older children when school is not in session. Thousands of families are saving up to \$1,100 a year. Low income families, who still receive a subsidy to help cover the reduced daily fee are now able to choose quality child care at no or minimal costs. Early reports are that many families are enrolling their children in quality, safe programs because, for the first time, they can afford it.

It is not only families of children using child care who benefit from the Child Care B.C. A growing body of research clearly demonstrates that public investment in the early years benefits everyone. Children who receive good care in their early years do better at school, are less likely to engage in risky behaviours, and are more likely to be gainfully employed when they grow up. Canadian economists calculate that for every \$1 we invest in quality child care, there is a \$2 saving down the road.

We applaud the government's commitment to extend Child Care B.C. to include all children, in the full range of child care and pre-school programs. It is THE RIGHT THING TO DO for children, families, and communities. It responds to thousands of British Columbians who told government that child care must be a top priority for immediate action.

And, there's the rub. The next phase of Child Care B.C. - infant and toddler care and school-aged care in family child care - will not begin until January, 2002. This timeline has led the media and Official Opposition to dismiss Child Care B.C. as just another pre-election promise. But our concern is not about politics - it is about children, families and the stability of child care programs in B.C.

We are therefore calling on:

- **Premier Dosanjh to implement the next phase of Child Care B.C. effective April 1, 2001.**
- **The Official Opposition to lend their support to the timely implementation of Child Care B.C.**

There is no excuse for delays. Infant and toddler care in this province is in crisis. Parents cannot afford the exorbitant costs (\$800- \$1000 a month) and infant-toddler programs cannot survive for another year without public funds. As we have said before - our children can't wait.