

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

Funding and Support provided by:

Status of Women Canada
- BC/Yukon Region
through Coalition of Child
Care Advocates of BC

Community Care Facilities Act and Child Care Licensing Regulation

July 2002

On April 8, 2002, the Honourable Katherine Whittred, Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term and Home Care introduced Bill 16, a new Community Care Facility (CCF) Act. The new Act will govern the licensing of BC's residential facilities for adults and children and '**child day care facilities**'. This summer, consultations on the draft Act and Regulations are underway.

Over the last decade, the child care community has put a lot of energy into advising government on child care regulations. And, as hard as it is to begin again, the upcoming consultations on a new CCF Act and Regulations are important for the future of child care and our voices must be heard.

In the past, the Forum responded to a request from child care advocates to provide "suggestions" for responses so that individuals could respond to internet consultations with greater ease. Once again members of the Forum have prepared a list of possible responses to the questions posed on the web site.

What You Can Do

Log onto www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/ccf/consultation/child.html to find out about meetings in your region. Check out the information on the site under "Community Consultation Schedule".

Respond on line. Use the Forum's points in your submissions and add your own points.

Submissions by individuals or groups can also be sent by mail to:
Director, Community Care Licensing Branch
1520 Blanshard Street, 2nd Floor
Victoria, B.C. V8W 3C8

Or faxed to 250 - 952-1486.

Responses are limited to 150 words or less to any one section. Responses over 150 words will be "automatically truncated".

Responses must be received no later than August 15th.

Together lets make sure that any changes to licensing and regulations improve and strengthen the quality of care for BC children.

DISCUSSION FORUM — Ministry of Health

CHILD CARE LICENSING REGULATION

www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/ccf/consultation/child.html

1. “The Ministry of Health seeks your comments on its plans to revise the Child Care Licensing Regulation”.

Provide your comments on this approach:

A growing body of research confirms that licensing regulation improves the quality of child care and that higher quality care leads to better developmental outcomes for children. BC's current child care Licensing and related Regulation is amongst the best in Canada. Of the 5 provinces included in “You Bet I Care” study (2000) care in BC in licensed group and regulated family child care settings was amongst the higher quality.

2. “The Ministry also welcomes your views on: thresholds for Licensing; staff to child ratios; group size; types of child care; staff qualifications; facility requirements; other ideas”

General Comments:

As BC already has some of the strongest child care regulations in Canada, there does not appear to be a need for any substantive changes.

Any changes to licensing regulation must ensure improvement and strengthening of the quality of all child care settings. BC's Licensing regulations must continue to ensure that the minimum standards for quality are met in child care settings as research highlights the importance of positive early childhood experiences in determining healthy outcomes for all areas of children's development.

3. “What do you think the threshold for licensing should be?”

Comments:

It should stay as is, at 3 and each caregiver providing care to more than 2 children, in addition to their own, should continue to require a license to operate a community care facility and to meet standards as laid out in the Act and Regulation.

4. For Family Child Care: “What do you think the staff to child ratios should be? And what changes, if any, would you make to the current requirements for Family Child Care”

Comments:

The maximum group size and staff to child ratios in licensed family child care should remain as they currently are in BC's Regulation, regardless of how many caregivers are on site. As caregivers are one of the most important factors in ensuring quality care, government should commit adequate resources to ensure that adequate training and continuing professional development opportunities are a requirement and accessible for all Family Child Care providers.

5. For Group Care: “What do you think the staff to child ratios should be?”

Comments:

The staff to child ratios in group care should stay as they currently are in BC. Lower ratios allow more opportunities for individual attention and positive group experiences improving the likelihood of quality care for the children.

6. “What changes, if any, do you think should be made to these ratios? Why?”

Comments:

No changes should be made in staff to child ratios unless it will positively impact on the quality of care provided to the children e.g., 1:3 for infant care.

7. “What do you think the group sizes should be? Why?”

Comments:

The group sizes should stay as the current Regulation requires as smaller group sizes contribute to the quality of interaction between the children and the providers, a primary component of quality care.

8. “How many types of child care should there be? Would you combine some of these? Which ones? Would you add more?”

Comments:

Adding a mixed age category to the current types of care with similar small group sizes could allow some providers to meet the varied needs of families and communities.

9. “What do you think the staff qualifications should be?”

For Group Child Care — “Provide your opinion on the appropriate qualifications you feel are required for each of the categories and why.”

Comments:

The training requirements and expectations re continuing professional development in the current regulations should be maintained and/or strengthened.

Training for all school aged care providers should be an additional requirement.

Additional training opportunities for working with infants/toddlers, children from diverse cultures, and children who have extra support needs must continue to be a requirement and must be available and accessible across the province.

Government must commit to adequately funding and improving the accessibility to appropriate training in order to ensure that all child care providers have basic training and access to ongoing professional development opportunities.

10. “What other ideas do you have? What barriers have you encountered?”

Comments:

Government must ensure that all licensed regulated child care programs have the resources they need to meet and exceed licensing requirements. This will depend upon inter ministerial cooperation, integrated policy development, and a commitment to child care that is funded like other public programs, through the tax system.

11. “What Section(s), if any, of the current regulations is problematic? What would you do to fix it?”

Comments:

Any changes to Licensing and the Regulations must improve and strengthen the quality of care for BC’s children. While flexibility and responsiveness are important, changes must not erode the quality of care for BC’s children.