

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

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Summer Advocacy Messages 2006

Summer is here – a time for some well-deserved rest and relaxation. But summer is also the ideal time for some ‘down home’ advocacy.

The ‘experts’ tell us that the most effective advocacy happens when MLAs and MPs meet with and hear directly from their constituents at home in their offices. These personal connections stand out from the thousands of letters, briefs, reports and petitions they receive.

During the summer, MLAs and MPs are in their constituencies. Now is the time to book an appointment and make child care advocacy up front and personal.

So, book a visit, share your local child care stories and use the messages below to make sure that politicians from all political parties hear a consistent message about key issues and next steps.

Messages for your Provincial MLA

BC has been virtually silent on the pending cut of over \$450 million dedicated child care dollars from the federal government. They have not reinvested provincial funds in child care, they have not released a BC Child Care Action Plan and they have further fragmented services by separating ministerial responsibility for child care from responsibility for early learning.

Tell your MLA that:

1. With or without federal dollars, the province is responsible for developing and funding a quality child care system that promotes healthy childhood development AND supports working families.
2. The report on BC’s Community Consultations on Early Learning and Child Care affirms that:
 - Access to quality child care must be a priority.
 - Investments in wages, working conditions and professional development are required to recruit and retain skilled staff.
 - Quality child care is early learning and childhood development.
 - Stable child care operating funding is the top priority.Government must act on this advice.
(See www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/consult.htm for Consultation Report)
3. BC promised a Child Care Action Plan by January 31, 2006. But there is still no plan. Families and providers still don’t know what will happen when the federal funds end on April 1, 2007.
4. Labour shortages are a growing problem in BC. But without child care, parents – especially mothers – can’t work.

Ask your MLA for a firm commitment that she or he will make child care a top priority.

Messages for your MP

The federal minority government has reversed significant progress on child care. They have implemented a taxable family allowance that will help some families, but is NOT child care. As of March 31, 2007 they will cancel the existing Early Learning and Child Care Agreements with BC (and other provinces). Over \$450 million BC was to receive for regulated child care is at stake. They plan to increase child care spaces by offering tax incentives to businesses – an approach that may open Canada up to big box child care chains.

Tell your MP that:

1. 77% of Canadians think the lack of affordable child care is a serious problem. Most Canadians prefer funding for affordable child care services over a taxable annual benefit (see <http://action.web.ca/home/ccaac/alerts.shtml?x=89810> for Poll results).
2. To really support families, the federal government must restore multi year funding to provinces and territories for building quality, affordable child care systems.
3. Capital funding without on-going operating funding will not work. And, tax incentives won't guarantee that new spaces will meet community priorities.
4. The new taxable family allowance may help some but it doesn't create child care spaces and doesn't cover the cost of child care. In fact, it benefits higher income families with one 'at home' parent more than it helps lower income families who need child care because both parents work (see www.caledoninst.org for analysis of after tax benefits).
5. Labour shortages are a growing problem in Canada. But without child care, parents – especially mothers – can't work.
6. And, if your MP thinks we are advocating for 'institutional child care' take some pictures with you – or better yet invite her or him to visit your family child care home or centre.

Ask your MP for a firm commitment that she or he will make child care a top priority.

Some tips to help make it easy:

- Find the name and contact information for
Your MLA at <http://www.legis.gov.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>
Your MP at http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct_e.html#mp
- Take someone with you – preferably a parent who needs child care.
- Speak from the heart. Tell your stories. Don't worry about having tons of facts.
- Take notes.
- After your meeting(s) send us a quick note about who you met with and what they said.
Email us at forum@cccabc.bc.ca.
- **Speak as if you represent the majority because you do!**