

Child Care Advocacy Forum

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School Age Child
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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

News Release

August 1, 2001

Mini-Budget Fails Children

Vancouver, BC – The provincial Government's Mini-Budget of July 30 fails children and families, says the Child Care Advocacy Forum, an alliance of six provincial child care organizations.

"By eliminating funding for the Child Care B.C. Program, the mini-budget does nothing to address the real needs of the vast majority of B.C. families whose children need child care and pre-school programs," says Darcelle Cottons of the BC Association of Child Care Services and Director of UBC Child Care Services.

Funding that was supposed to go to infant and toddler child care programs as of January, 2002 was cut in the budget. This funding would have made these programs available to parents for \$14 a day, and provided a savings to them of up to \$6000 a year.

Infant and toddler child care is very expensive because licensing regulations require one staff person for every four children receiving care. This requirement reflects the high level of vulnerability and needs of very young children. Most infant and toddler child care programs operate at a financial loss because, although care is expensive for providers, fees are already beyond the means of many parents.

"Now, these already fragile programs are increasingly vulnerable and I am sure that some will be forced to close," Ms Cottons continues.

It has now been confirmed that the Liberals will repeal the Child Care B.C. Act by the end of the summer.

According to Susan Harney, Chairperson of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, "This action has dashed the hopes of the thousands of families across B.C. who expected access to affordable, quality child care. Government had an opportunity to invest in quality child care services that support children's development and make it possible for their parents to work and study, but they have clearly chosen other priorities."

"16 million dollars cut from the child care budget is unbelievable," Ms Harney continues. "Instead of using dollars to increase and improve services to children and families, the province is using them to address the budget deficit it created through its sweeping tax cuts. Regrettably, young children are the ones who are being asked to pay the price."