

CHILD CARE RALLY PLANNING TIPS

The members of the Child Care Advocacy Forum are looking forward to working with you to plan for coordinated rallies on child care across the province on:

Friday, October 1, 1999

We suggest - 11:30 - 1:00 but choose a time that works best for your community

The rallies are a key part of our on-going campaign around two simple messages to the provincial government. By October 1, 1999 we are calling on the government to:

- Provide fair and equitable access for child care to the wages and benefits established for the rest of the community social services sector at no additional cost to parents
- Make a commitment to and plan for a publicly funded child care system that provides all children and families with access to a range of quality, regulated child care services.

If government is going to respond, we need to let them know that many parents, caregivers and community members across the province are prepared to act to back up our commitment to children and families! **We think that a series of coordinated rallies across the province, all with the same message can make a real difference.**

The Child Care Advocacy Forum can provide background information, press releases, rally handouts and suggestions - but if the strategy is going to be effective, individuals and groups in each community will need to do the 'on the ground' organizing.

Here are some suggestions for how you might proceed:

1. **Work with a group** - organizing a rally will require the involvement of a number of people. It would be best to work through an existing child care group in your community (eg. The local ECE branch) but, if necessary, you can create an ad hoc committee to organize the rally. **Seek co-sponsors** for the rally by approaching other service, advocacy women's and labour groups for support.
2. **Contact the Forum** to let us know that your community will be holding a rally. We will add the details of your rally to a centralized information package
3. **Choose the location and tone** that will work for your community's rally. Two different approaches to consider are:
 - **A family style rally** - Choose a central, public location where parents can join the rally on their lunch hour. In this format, children can also participate. Disruption to services will be minimal, but this approach needs to attract lots of people to be effective.

- **A demonstration** - Choose a location with a clear political connection such as an MLA or Cabinet members offices. This approach is more 'political' and should be considered in communities with Cabinet Ministers. It can be effective with relatively small numbers of demonstrators and it might be possible for some people to participate in the demonstration without major disruptions in services. Remember, this is not a labour action - so you aren't trying to disrupt the operations of the office.

Be sure to check out the rules and regulations about using public spaces, holding demonstrations or marches etc. Get the necessary permits, approvals and insurance.

4. **Identify your media strategy.** The Forum will prepare and distribute sample press releases, but you will need a local media plan. Early on, think about your approach to the media. You want to let the media know about the rally in advance and then to be prepared to speak with the media at the rally. Its best to have 1 or 2 people who are designated to speak on behalf of the rally organizers.
5. **Prepare signs, buttons and handouts.** The Forum will be able to provide some materials for use at your rally but visible messages like signs, banners, balloons, buttons, etc. will have to be done locally. Some possible slogans that seem to strike a cord include:

Children can't wait	Love the job, hate the pay
Child Care - a support for all	Child Care = B.C. won't work without it
6. **Plan a lively program.** Its always good to hear from a number of 'voices', but try to keep the speech making short and punchy. You may want to have a parent, a care provider and a respected community member from another sector each speak briefly. Include the provincial messages and add local details about the chid care situation. The organizations participating in the Forum will prepare and distribute messages of solidarity that can be part of your program. We will also send out 'speech writing tips' if that would be helpful. If you are planning a family style rally, consider some entertainment - especially if children are involved.
7. **Have an action plan.** People get energized by rallies and are often eager to take some further action. Plan and announce things that people can do after the rally such as a petition, letter writing campaign, meeting with the MLA, etc.
8. Let us know how it went! Contact the Advocacy Forum after your rally to let us know how it went and we will prepare a provincial summary of action.

We hope that this is helpful. BUT - you know your community best - so be creative and plan a rally that builds on your community's strengths and interests.