

PROVINCIAL BUDGET 2001 - WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Believe it or not - its that time of year again when the provincial government is asking for input on its budget priorities for next year. WE HAVE UNTIL NOV. 30 TO TELL THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT THAT CHILD CARE IS IMPORTANT TO US!

We know we are a little late in getting this information out to you - we have been busy with the Federal Election. But, its not too late to have our voices heard. There are 2 ways to get involved.

1. Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Community Hearings

An all party committee of the B.C. legislature is touring 14 communities in the province to hear submissions, from the public, on budget priorities. **It is really important that the committee hears about child care at the each and every remaining consultation!**

More information is available through the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services Web-site: www.legis.gov.bc.ca/cmt/cmt06/ or go to the BC government's home page, to the Legislative Assembly of BC and to "Committees". On the Committee's web-pages is the membership of the committee, its terms of reference and its schedule. (We have attached a schedule below) Contact the Clerk's Office toll free at 1-877-428-8337 by E-mail at ClerkComm@leg.bc.ca. for information and/or to book your presentation.

Don't worry about an elaborate presentation - just stick to the following 3 key messages:

* The government's decision to move towards a comprehensive, publicly funded child care system is the right thing to do. Many families, with school aged children, will see an immediate benefit this coming January when they can begin to access before and after school care for \$7 a day. Other families need and want the benefits of this program extended to them as soon as possible. (Add some specific examples from your community).

* The commitment of \$16 million for this new initiative in the 2000/01 budget (annualized to \$30 million) was a good first step. And, B.C.'s promise to use a substantial amount of the federal funds it will receive from the Federal Government (First Minister's Agreement on Early Childhood Development Services) is to be applauded.

* Your message to the Committee is - "Stay the Course". A commitment to child care in next year's budget needs to be sustained and strengthened so that we can provide all families and children with access to quality, safe, affordable care as quickly as possible.

2. Ministry of Finance's Budget Consultation Document

The Ministry of Finance has released a Budget Consultation Document which is available at www.fin.gov.bc.ca/bcp/ or from your local MLAs office. The document includes a number of questions about budget priorities. Unfortunately, there is no specific question on child care - but Question 3 does ask you to identify areas where government should increase spending. So, on the line next to "Other" we encourage you to respond -

"Spend more money on child care. There is no greater investment."

You can respond by: FAX (1-250-356-8172)
Phone (toll free - 1-877-428-8337 or collect 1-250-356-2933)
E-mail: ClerkComm@leg.bc.ca
ON-line at www.fin.gov.bc.ca

IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE CHILD CARE VOICE IS HEARD - SO PLEASE
TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO RESPOND AND PASS THIS MESSAGE ON.

Schedule of STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE GOVERNMENT SERVICES Hearings:

(Check with the Clerk's Office for locations)

Victoria, Tuesday, November 21, 2000

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 01:00 p.m.

Place: Douglas Fir Committee Room, Parliament Buildings,

Courtenay, Tuesday, November 21, 2000

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 08:00 p.m.

Mission, Wednesday, November 22, 2000

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 01:00 p.m.

Vancouver, Wednesday, November 22, 2000

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Kelowna, Tuesday, November 28, 2000

Time: 4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Penticton, Tuesday, November 28, 2000

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 01:00 p.m.

Cranbrook, Wednesday, November 29, 2000

Time: 5:00 p.m. to 09:00 p.m.

Grand Forks, Wednesday, November 29, 2000

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 01:00 p.m.

Kamloops, Thursday, November 30, 2000

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 02:00 p.m.

Williams Lake, Thursday, November 30, 2000

Time: 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.