

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 of BC

Westcoast Child Care
Resource Centre

Western Canada Family
Child Care Association
of BC

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through Coalition of Child
Care Advocates of BC



VANCOUVER
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THEY CAN AFFORD IT!

August, 2003

Recently, Minister Lynn Stephens announced 'key elements' of a long-term plan for child care. Minister Stephens says that this is a 'sustainable plan' that 'truly supports families, children and childcare providers' in BC. We disagree! Over a 3 year period, this 'child care plan' represents cuts of close to \$50 million in provincial spending on child care. As a result, affordability, inclusion, quality and caregiver remuneration are getting worse, not better.

We have a concrete solution for how government can undo the damage and invest in a child care system that meets the needs of all. Here's how:

- ✓ Under the federal/provincial Agreement on Early Childhood Development Initiatives (ECDI) signed in Sept. 2000, BC will receive \$66.3 million in 2003/04; \$66.1 million in 2004/05; \$66.6 million in 2005/06.
- ✓ Under the new federal/provincial Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care (MF) signed in March, 2003 BC will receive \$3.3 million this year, \$10.4 in 2004/05; \$20.1 million in 2005/06; \$40.5 million in 2006/07; and \$47.6 million on 2007/08.
- ✓ If the provincial government followed community advice and spent 2/3 of the ECDI funds on child care and all of the funds under the Multilateral Framework on regulated child care, as they are required to do, over the next 3 years, they could increase child care spending as follows:

2003/04 - \$44.2 million (ECDI) + \$3.3 million (MF) = \$47.5 million
2004/05 - \$44 million (ECDI) + \$10.4 million (MF) = \$54.4 million
2005/06 - \$44.4 million (ECDI) + \$20.1 million (MF) = \$64.5 million

These funds and a commitment to restore provincial child care spending to 2000/01 levels could begin to make a real difference. BC could cap parent fees at more affordable rates, bring wages in the sector up to adequate benchmarks, stabilize existing child care programs and enhance support to parents and caregivers.

It's not about what government can afford to do – it's about political will.

To date, BC has only spent \$6 million of its total ECDI funds on child care. Another \$6 million of the 2001/02 ECDI allocation has not yet been spent. The government has also announced that all of the first year's allocation under the new Multilateral Framework will go to Supported Child Care, which is being refocused on child development rather than on child care.

Clearly, this government is prepared to spend federal and provincial funds on **anything but child care.**

Email Premier Campbell at premier@gov.bc.ca, Minister Lynn Stephens at lynn.stephens.mla@leg.bc.ca, the Minister of Finance, Gary Collins at gary.collins.mla@leg.bc.ca and your MLA. Ask them to explain where \$166.4 million that could and should be spent on child care is going.