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Financial and in-kind support is
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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT #2 :: November 2007

CORPORATE CHILD CARE

Recently, Linda Reid, BC's Minister of State for Child Care, wrote provincial child care organizations and appeared in the media to assure British Columbians that it was not her intent to open the door to corporate child care in BC. This is good news if it means the BC government agrees with the community that corporate child care is not the solution to BC's child care crisis.

Minister Reid says that perhaps we are misinformed about her government's current policies and suggests the following rationale should put our concerns to rest:

- The \$12.5 million in major child care capital funds that is now available to private companies can only be used to create new spaces – not to buy existing spaces.
- The 'overwhelming majority' of group child care spaces in BC are operated by non-profit societies. Non-profit societies are prohibited from being converted to corporations or from allowing associated individuals to benefit from the sale of society assets.
- The recent decision to make public capital funds available to the private sector reflects the voices of providers, professionals and families.

To set the record straight:

- The child care community fully understands current policy but is still not assured by Minister Reid's rationale.
- Even though corporations cannot use public capital funding to buy existing centres, once established in BC they can use public funds to operate and expand.
- The most recent public records available show that only 60% of child care spaces in BC are non-profit*. Minister Reid should define what constitutes an 'overwhelming majority' and provide current data to back that up.
- The rules for non-profit societies do not prevent them from selling their child care programs to corporations.
- There is no record of public consultations on child care that support corporate child care. Rather, the public record indicates widespread support for making child care more affordable for parents, improving quality through increased wages and ensuring accountability for public funds as the way forward.
- **To really assure British Columbians that government is not encouraging corporate child care, Minister Reid needs to implement sound public policies and accountable public funding that build a high quality, affordable child care system that meets the needs of all.**

* Friendly, Beach & Turiano, Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2001, Childcare Resource and Research Unit, University of Toronto.