

From **OCTOBER 1 - 15** **VOICE THE CHILD CARE VISION!**

The Child Care Advocacy Forum, an alliance of six provincial child care organizations, is initiating a province wide campaign to **VOICE THE CHILD CARE VISION**. The goals of the campaign are to:

- raise the profile of the Advocacy Forum's "Common Agenda and Vision for Child Care Services in B.C." with the public and with provincial politicians
- add our voices to those who are calling on the federal government to make the next budget a Children's Budget.

From **October 1 - 15**, we are asking communities across the province to organize activities and events that can help achieve these goals. Here are some suggestions of things that you and your colleagues might do:

- "Chat up Child Care". Make an appointment with your local MLA and/or MP (ideally on October 1st but any time during the two week target dates would be fine). Take a small or large delegation with you. With provincial politicians, focus on the need for a publicly supported child care system and the Common Agenda and Vision. With federal politicians, focus on the next federal budget and the Children Can't Wait Campaign. This activity will work best if we can contact large numbers of politicians. (Materials attached)
- Participate in the "Face the Future" campaign - a parent initiative to send photographs of children to provincial politicians to highlight the need for high quality, affordable, accessible, publicly funded and accountable child care in B.C. (Materials attached)
- "Invite your MLA or MP to Tea". Ask your elected representatives to join you, the children and parents for snack. Use the time to highlight your program. Don't forget to invite the media - but be sure to let the politicians' staff know that the media will be present. Have copies of the Common Agenda and Vision ready to give to your guests.
- Create a "mall display". Find a busy public place that will allow you to set up a display. Your display could focus on a slogan such as '*I Care about Child Care*' or '*B.C. Works if Child Care Works*'. Passerbys could sign a petition to provincial and federal politicians. Better yet, passerbys could have their pictures taken with a Polaroid and sign the picture - creating a photographic petition. People could be asked to contribute the cost of their photo. Be sure to have lots of materials available to hand out, including information about the child care situation in your community.
- Hold a "festival or celebration". Get together with a number of child care programs in your area. Bring the children; parents; have entertainment; food and fun. Make signs that will bring people's attention to the importance of quality child care.
- Include materials in your newsletters and put a 'Parent Package' in each child's cubby.
- Organize a 'walk around the block' to show how many people use and work in child care programs throughout the community. Provide child care programs in your community with the same balloons or signs, and ask them to walk around their own block at a pre set time. Choose a time at the beginning or end of the day, so parents can participate. This is a great activity for Child Care Resource and Referral Programs to coordinate.

- Contact your local media. Write letters to your local newspapers. Phone your local paper and ask them to cover your community event. Ask to be a guest on a community radio show or submit a story for publication in the local press.
- Check to see if there are other community events being held in your area during the first two weeks of October. Find a way to join in to these activities by distributing materials at a "booth", hanging banners, etc.

Remember - these activities are just suggestions. You know what will work best in your community. Use your creativity and make this a positive event in your neighbourhood.

Regardless of what you do, it will be important to:

- be positive and stay focused on the benefits for children, families and communities
- be clear that we expect our governments to fund a strong child care system
- invite politicians to your events
- take lots of pictures, for posterity and future planning
- keep the Child Care Advocacy Forum in the communications loop

To help support your community events, we have attached the following print materials:

1. Child Care Services in B.C. - A Common Agenda and Vision (This is also available in Chinese, Spanish, Punjabi and Vietnamese. Call Westcoast for copies)
2. Child Care Advocacy Forum's Media Release of July 22
3. Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada's "Children Can't Wait" campaign
4. Parent Advocacy Network's "Face the Future" Campaign information
5. "Is Child Care A Good Public Investment" and "Quebec's New Family Policy" from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit

Please feel free to copy any or all of these materials as handouts for the press, participants at your community event and others who may be interested. If you need more copies, please call Carol Anderson at Westcoast at (604) 709-5661.

We have also included the following resource materials:

1. A list of media contacts around the province
2. Tips for Meeting the Press and Writing Speeches
3. A Community Organizers' Form to let us know what you are doing.
4. A list of organizational participants in the Child Care Advocacy Forum

**There are lots of ways to Voice the Vision but silence won't work!
The most important aspect of this campaign is that WE ALL DO SOMETHING!**