

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

Westcoast Child
Care Resource
Centre

Western Canada
Family Child
Care Association
of BC

99-12-06

The Honorable Andrew Petter
Minister of Intergovernmental Relations
Parliament Buildings - Room 301
PO Box 9059, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Petter,

We understand that on Dec. 17, 1999 you will be representing B.C. at Social Union discussions in Ottawa. At these discussion, members of the Child Care Advocacy Forum are counting on you to make federal/ provincial cooperation on **child care a top priority**.

The Child Care Advocacy Forum of B.C. is an alliance of six provincial child care organizations that bring together over 4000 individuals, groups and child care services in B.C. We work to advance the attached "Common Agenda and Vision for Child Care Services in B.C." We know that the upcoming Social Union meetings are happening at a critical time for families and children in B.C. and Canada.

After more than 20 years of inaction and broken promises, there is now a real opportunity to make progress on the child care agenda. The Federal government has a budget surplus; a majority of Canadian's support more public spending on child care; and the Social Union provides a process for initiating new social programs in Canada.

However, progress is not guaranteed. We know that if there are no provincial 'champions' for child care at federal/provincial tables, the federal government will have an excuse for yet more inaction. We need you, a member of a government that says it is committed to child care, to take leadership on this crucial issue. We expect you to call on the federal government to make its next budget a Children's Budget with a specific first year allocation of \$2 billion to support provincial/territorial development of child care systems. We expect you to show that B.C. is serious by making a significant increase in provincial spending on child care in your government's next budget. And, we expect you to work with the other provinces to ensure progress.

As you know, your government is in the middle of a broad public discussion about how to solve the urgent child care problems facing families, children and care givers. Your colleague, Minister Sihota, has already heard from thousands of British Columbians who want both levels of government to make a commitment to a publicly funded system that entitles all children to affordable, quality care. This message is echoed by more than 75% of British Columbians who want the federal and provincial governments to give a high priority to public funding for quality child care services in their upcoming budgets. (Oct., 1999 - McIntyre and Mustel Research Ltd.) **The majority of British Columbians who want action on child care, are counting on you to represent them at the upcoming Social Union talks.**

Sincerely,

Rita Chudnovsky, Facilitator - Child Care Advocacy Forum

cc. The Honourable Moe Sihota - Minister of Social Development and Economic Security
Lyn Tait, Deputy Minister - Intergovernmental Relations