

WE KEPT OUR EYES ON THE 'PRIZE'

And - it worked!

Now, let's celebrate the victory.

What's the Prize?

On March 15, 2000 the Government of B.C., in its first Throne Speech since the election of Premier Ujjal Dosanjh, made a commitment to begin the development of a publicly funded child care system in B.C. **This is a HUGE VICTORY.**

After decades of hard work - OUR MESSAGE WAS HEARD. For the first time, a provincial government acknowledged the need for a publicly funded system that entitles all children and families to quality, affordable child care.

The Throne Speech was followed up by the provincial Budget on March 27. The Budget allocates 14 million new dollars to begin "implementation of a before-and-after child care program on school sites". While this is a modest financial commitment, it is a critical first step in building the child care system that we need! And, Minister Jan Pullinger (the Minister now responsible for child care) says, that over a 5 - 6 year period, the government will work with parents and child care providers to make publicly funded child care available for **all** children.

How did we win the Prize?

Government's actions are a direct response to the successful campaign we waged over the last year. 10,000 people responded to the Discussion Paper, "Building A Better Future for B.C. Kids" and the overwhelming majority of responses called for a publicly funded system for all children.

The Child Care Advocacy Forum wants to thank everyone who worked so hard to send government a clear and consistent message. Your individual efforts and **our collective ability to stay focused on the 'big picture' made the difference.**

Here's one way to think about the impact of our efforts. Government projects that, in this fiscal year, 10,000 children will have access to a school aged child care space that costs \$7 - \$8 a day (less for low income parents). So - 1 letter = 1 affordable space! **So, now it's time to celebrate the progress we've made!**

We know that there are many questions yet to be answered, and many 'implementation hurdles' to address. But, for a few minutes we encourage you to put these aside. Instead, take pride and pleasure in knowing that we now live in one of only two jurisdictions in North America where there is a commitment to build a comprehensive, publicly funded child care system.

We wish we could host and toast this achievement at a great big party. We can't, so we invite you to find your way to celebrate. Raise your coffee cups at break time; give yourselves a round of applause at your next parent or staff meeting; or indulge yourself with a special treat.

Most importantly, let everyone know that we have made a real difference for children and families in B.C.