

# 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

## **Funding and Support provided by:**

Status of Women Canada  
- BC/Yukon Region  
through Coalition of Child  
Care Advocates of BC



VANCOUVER  
FOUNDATION

**Let's Vote  
Child  
Care!**

June 2004

While Canadians are no longer waiting for a federal election call, Canada's children are still waiting for a child care system that meets their needs.

In the lead up to the June 28, 2004 federal election, the BC Child Care Advocacy Forum will be working with others across the country to:

- ✓ make child care a key issue in every riding.
- ✓ seek a political commitment for a publicly funded child care system that meets the needs of all of Canada's children.
- ✓ ensure that everyone who understands the importance of child care for our children, families and communities **votes child care**.

We hope that our election materials and those produced by our partners across Canada (see links below) will help YOU build the child care vote.

## **Why does the Federal Election Matter?**

For over two decades, child care advocates in Canada have called for a child care system that meets the needs of all of Canada's children. Yet, in spite of conclusive research about the importance of the early years, Canada's investment in young children still lags behind other nations.

Recently, the federal government began to take some first steps. In 2000, the federal government signed the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Agreement with 9 provinces and 3 territories to improve and expand early childhood programs including child care. To date, BC has received over \$223 million through the ECD Agreement.

In 2003, the federal government committed an additional \$1 billion over 5 years specifically for child care through the Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care. BC has received over \$23 million through this Framework with an additional \$114 million expected over the next 3 years.

Yet, in spite of these agreements, the child care situation in BC is worse, not better. In 2004/05 alone, BC's own child care spending will be about \$50 million less than in 2001/02. This is because the current agreements allow BC to cut its own funding for child care and do not hold BC accountable for spending designated funds to build a publicly funded child care system.

So, while the federal government has taken some important first steps, the experience in BC proves that we need a federal government that will do more and will ensure that more is done for child care in BC.

## What are we asking for?

We are seeking a commitment from all political parties that, if elected, they will:

1. Develop and implement a five to ten year plan for a publicly funded child care system that entitles all of Canada's children access to quality child care.
2. Commit sufficient federal funds to build a child care system that meets the needs of all. Over ten years, the goal should be to invest at least 1% of Canada's Gross Domestic Product on child care, as recommended by the European Union.
3. Require that provinces and territories restore child care funding cuts, maintain or increase their own spending on licensed child care and use designated funds to build a publicly funded child care system as a condition for receiving federal funds.

## What can you do?

### 1. Register to Vote

You are entitled to vote in the federal election if you are a Canadian citizen and will be 18 or older on election day. Contact Elections Canada at [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca) or at 1-800-463-6868 to make sure you are registered to vote.

### 2. Make Child Care an issue in your riding

Make sure that every candidate in your riding knows that you and others will **vote child care**.

Phone or visit your candidates, ask about child care if they knock on your door, attend 'all candidates' meetings and ask a child care question, write letters to the editor, call talk shows and answer polls about the issues that matter to voters.

Here are some questions to ask...

*If elected, are you committed to building a publicly funded child care system for Canada's children?*

*What concrete steps will you and your party take over the next five years to achieve this goal?*

### 3. Vote CHILD CARE on June 28

Let's show politicians that we are a political force that can make a difference.

Let's vote for people who will advance our child care vision.

Let's encourage everyone else who cares about child care to get out and vote too.

For more child care related election resources and tools, check the following websites regularly

[www.cccabc.bc.ca/forum](http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/forum)  
[www.childcareadvocacy.ca](http://www.childcareadvocacy.ca)

[www.firstcall.org](http://www.firstcall.org)  
[www.parentvoices.ca](http://www.parentvoices.ca)

[www.cccabc.bc.ca](http://www.cccabc.bc.ca)