

Letter to the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority from the Coalition

June 12th, 2002

Mr. Hugh McLeod
Chief Executive Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority
200-520 W. 6th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4H5

Dear Mr. McLeod,

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is writing to express our concern about the future of the child care services at Vancouver General Hospital and G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre. While we appreciate that the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority is seeking a non-profit society to operate child care services out of the existing facilities, the decision made to eliminate financial support for on-site child care services has severe repercussions for child care staff, and for parents using these services.

It is shameful that our provincial government has now created a climate where child care programs must consider rolling back staff wages in order to keep their doors open. It continues to be unacceptable for child care staff to be asked or expected to subsidize our child care system. Early childhood education is a public service that benefits us all and deserves to be funded, like other public systems, through the tax system.

It is equally shameful that the provincial government has created a situation in which families are expected to pay higher fees in order to keep the doors open. Parents in BC pay over \$1.35 billion a year in child care fees and the cost of quality child care is already beyond the reach of the majority of low and moderate income families. A system in which only the most affluent are able to access quality programs flies in the face of the population health research documenting the importance of the early years on lifelong health outcomes.

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates is committed to a child care system in which those who deliver services receive wages and working conditions that reflect the level of training, responsibility and value of work performed. This position is supported by a growing body of research demonstrating that human resource issues including child care specific training, compensation levels and professional development opportunities are key predictors of quality in early childhood development programs. (You Bet I Care, May 2000).

The child care field has fought long and hard to advance an agenda that includes appropriate pay for the vital work done by child care workers. Over recent years, trade unions have also played an important role in recognizing and promoting higher wages and benefits for child care workers. While much remains to be done, progress has been achieved.

We call on the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority to join us in calling on the provincial and federal governments to make a commitment to a publicly funded child care system that ensures every child has access to quality, affordable child care. This is the only way in which to truly resolve the problem!

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates will continue to speak out loudly on behalf of children, their families and child care workers. We will continue to stand in solidarity with child care advocates across the province through these dark days.

Yours Truly,

Board of Directors
CCCABC

cc. Premier Gordon Campbell
Minister Lynn Stephens
Fred Muzin – President HEU
Bruce Harber – President VGH
Ruth Beardsley – Kids In General