

## WHAT ARE POLITICIANS SAYING ABOUT CHILD CARE?

### NDP, Liberals square off over day care

May 5 2005, CBC News

EXCERPT

VANCOUVER – NDP Leader Carole James accuses the B.C. Liberals of siphoning off more than half the federal dollars earmarked for childcare spaces in this province and using the money to pay for other programs.

"They basically used it to backfill programs and services that they cut," says James.

"Why haven't we seen those dollars that came to our province spent on childcare as they should have been. That was the agreement that they reached."

The Liberals deny diverting federal childcare dollars for other purposes, and claim they've created tens of thousands of day-care spaces in B.C.

... Premier Gordon Campbell doesn't differentiate between the funding of childcare spaces and early childhood development programs.

"It goes to both early childhood development and childcare," he says. "We've actually increased the number of childcare spaces in British Columbia."

Childcare advocates argue the current system has been devastated in the past few years. And they agree with the NDP that the Liberals have been diverting money to other programs.

"When the federal government's \$246 million over the last three years has been received, it's been taken and put into other programs, anything but childcare," says Sheila Davidson, the City of Vancouver's Child and Youth Advocate.

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### Campbell's child care cuts leave families paying more, getting less Carole James to put federal child care dollars to use immediately

May 5, 2005

(Burnaby) -- Gordon Campbell's broken child care promise has left families paying more, getting less, and unable to take advantage of economic opportunities, NDP Leader Carole James said today. She committed to using new federal funding to expand the availability of child care in BC.

"During the 2001 election, Mr. Campbell promised to encourage the expansion of safe, affordable child care spaces," said James. "He broke that promise. One of his first actions was to eliminate before and after school child care. Then he cut subsidies for low-income parents putting child care out of reach for thousands of families."

"I am committing that every penny of the \$650 million in child care funds will go to high quality, affordable child care for working families," said James. "This funding will increase child care spaces by 20 per cent, reduce wait lists, and make child care more affordable for ordinary families."

James said that Manitoba, Saskatchewan and recently Alberta have reached agreements with the federal government to expand the availability of child care in their provinces, but Campbell has been dragging his feet. "Even when the

funding is available, Mr. Campbell still can't be trusted to make life better for ordinary families."

"The Campbell Liberals went too far when they cut funding for foster care, tried to cut seniors' bus passes, cut interpreters for deaf students and spent \$5 million to cut 46 people off welfare," said James. "They've also been spending federal dollars intended for childcare on other purposes."

In 2004-05, the federal government provided \$94 million to BC for child care. The Campbell Liberals spent only \$40 million of the money on child care, diverting the majority of the funds to other activities of government.

The federal government will provide \$650 million in new funding to BC for childcare over the next five years.

Under James' plan, the \$650 million will provide 15,000 new child care spaces that will be built in accordance with five key principles - high quality, affordability, accessibility, a commitment to our children's development, and accountability.

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### **Hagen denies NDP accusations of child care foot-dragging**

May 5, 2005

VANCOUVER/CKNW(AM980) - B.C.'s Children's Minister, Stan Hagen, rejects the NDP's claim that the government has been dragging its feet on getting a deal with Ottawa on child care.

NDP leader Carole James today announced her party would distribute all federal child care money appropriately.

James claims the B.C. Liberals have put more than half of the federal child care money from 2004-2005 into general revenue.

But Hagen says the province has been negotiating a deal that works for B.C.

He says by the end of the fiscal year, B.C. will have spent all of the money Ottawa has sent on child care.

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### **Build on the progress made**

An excerpt from The Vancouver Sun, 19 Apr 2005

Gordon Campbell, Leader, B.C. Liberal Party

"On May 17, people in 79 ridings will elect their MLA and choose a government for British Columbia. Citizens will determine who is really best to lead our province forward and keep our economy going strong. Your answer will determine whether we build upon the progress that British Columbians have worked so hard to achieve under Liberal government."

"For the first time in more than a decade, families are benefiting from a strong economy. We have made 32,000 more child-care spaces eligible for funding, extended child-care subsidies to 10,000 more children."

"A golden decade awaits us all. The first step is to keep our economy on the right track. And that's why we're asking for your vote of confidence. A vote for a more prosperous future for your family and for our kids."

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### **New ideas to benefit all**

An excerpt from The Vancouver Sun, 19 Apr 2005

Carole James, Leader, B.C. New Democratic Party

"British Columbia is a wealthy and beautiful place. A province with limitless potential and opportunity that can be shared and enjoyed among all British Columbians. But that's not what is happening today in B.C. Over the past four years, we've seen a one-sided approach to governing that holds little regard for how much ordinary families are hurt along the way.

Gordon Campbell and the B.C. Liberals promised to make things better for everyone, but their record betrays that promise."

"We can achieve so much more by working together, ending confrontation and focusing on balanced, common-sense solutions that benefit all."

"I will work to expand child-care choices and reduce K-12 class sizes."

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### **Liberal Party - "The real story on child care"**

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#### **Federal dollars for childcare must be used to restore affordability, ensure quality in the system: James**

VANCOUVER -- Premier Gordon Campbell must commit that any new federal funds for child care resulting from this Friday's federal-provincial childcare summit will be dedicated to new BC child care programs instead of being used to offset Liberal budget cuts, BC NDP Leader Carole James said today.

James introduced a three-point plan that would commit the BC government to using federal childcare dollars for the exclusive purpose of restoring affordability and ensuring quality in the province's childcare system.

"BC's system has become too expensive for the average families that need it, and it's no wonder. Instead of using federal money to provide better, more accessible childcare, the Campbell government has been using that money to offset provincial cuts to other programs," said James.

"For example, in fiscal 2004/2005 the provincial government used no more than \$40 million for childcare out of a total of \$94 million in available federal childcare funds. As a result, British Columbians have had to spend more for less childcare.

"We will ensure that all new federal funding for childcare actually goes to childcare, and we will set clear goals for a made-in-BC system. Only then can we start to restore and grow an affordable, accessible childcare programme that can meet the needs of today's families and our economy."

Speaking at a Vancouver area childcare centre, James outlined her three point plan to begin this process:

- a. Commit every dollar of federal money received by British Columbia for childcare to high quality, affordable childcare for all British Columbian families.
- b. Introduce legislation to enshrine a "made-in-BC" interpretation of the four key principles the federal government has attached to its funding. James said that given the Campbell government's record of diverting federal childcare dollars to other areas, a commitment to financial accountability should be included in the

legislation:

1. Quality  
One of the best ways to assure quality is through the licensing process. A priority focus should be strengthening the quality non-profit sector.
2. Universality  
The plan must be inclusive of all regardless of level of ability or income.
3. Accessibility  
The plan must move to make childcare available and affordable in all communities.
4. Developmentally focused  
Increased training opportunities in both ECD and Special Needs for childcare staff is essential to promoting physical, cognitive, cultural, social, emotional development.
5. Accountability (NDP proposal)  
Government spending in this area should be subject to an independent audit and tied to specific timelines and targets.

c. Additional funding should be invested in operational grants instead of subsidies. According to a 2004 OECD report on childcare in Canada, "operational funding seems to be a surer means of ensuring more highly qualified personnel and enriched learning environments... both of which are strong indicators of quality care."

"Under the Campbell government, many families have been forced to withdraw their children from licensed care, and many quality licensed facilities have been closed," said James. "What BC families need is a plan, entrenched in legislation, that halts the deterioration of childcare in this province and moves us towards a quality universal system."

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#### **MLA doesn't support universal child care**

An EXCERPT from Cariboo Press, 09 Feb 2005

Columbia River-Revelstoke MLA Wendy McMahon [Minister of State for Women's and Senior's Services] has declared her opposition to a publicly funded, universal child care system.

"This is an area of continued debate by those who support a universal system paid for by the government or, in other words, all taxpayers, and those who believe that they are responsible for raising their children without the interference or support of government," McMahon explained.

In an e-mail to The Valley Echo she indicated, "while I recognize that child care is a costly proposition, my husband and I would never have expected government to pay our child care expenses while we were raising our son and working outside the home."