



WHERE THE PARTIES STAND

In the lead up to the May 17 Provincial Election, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is working to get out an **informed** Child Care Vote. To help you decide how to vote, this document provides:

- A brief summary of the Child Care Platforms of the BC Liberal Party, the BC New Democratic Party and the BC Green Party (as of April 29, 2005).
- A brief analysis of how the platforms stack up against the key elements of the Coalition's Child Care Plan. (Our complete Plan is available at www.cccabc.bc.ca/act/bcvotes/fortherecord3.pdf)

BC LIBERALS

www.bcliberals.com/real_leadership,_real_progress/bc_liberal_platform/

What they say:

The BC Liberals say that during their first term they made 32,000 more daycare spaces eligible for funding and 10,000 more children eligible for subsidies and provided the highest funding for child care subsidies and capital improvements in BC history.

The BC Liberal Party platform promises to:

1. Increase child care through subsidies for low-income families and capital improvements.
2. Increase the income threshold to make more families eligible for child care subsidies.
3. Use underutilized school space as centres to deliver early childhood development and daycare services.
4. Expand childcare and early childhood development with an expected \$600 million in new federal funding over five years.
5. Work to build a national literacy strategy, a national Pharma-Care strategy and a national daycare strategy.

How it stacks up against our Child Care Plan

While in office, the BC Liberals cut provincial child care spending by \$40 million annually. They:

- Reduced the total amount of funding going to 'daycare' spaces by close to \$15 million and spread that reduced amount over a larger number of spaces.

- Made it harder for low- and moderate-income families to get child care subsidies which hurt up to 10,500 families who lost all or part of the child care subsidy. Now, the Liberals are using federal funds to reverse some of the subsidy cuts. But, the current income eligibility cut off level for subsidy is only \$15 higher than it was in 2001 and the total number of families who can access subsidies is only back to where they started.

For more details on the Liberals' child care record, see www.cccabc.bc.ca/act/bcvotes/fortherecord2.pdf

The BC Liberals **have** promised to use federal funds on child care and early childhood development.

The BC Liberals **have not** promised to:

- Enact Child Care Legislation that enshrines the principles of a BC child care system.
- Develop and implement an action plan to move to a universal child care system.
- Use all projected federal funds on child care.
- Restore provincial funding cuts to child care.

In short, the BC Liberal Platform continues the policy directions of their first term. While they are prepared to work with and use federal funding, there is still no commitment to a universal system, no action plan, no restoration of provincial funding and an on-going separation of 'daycare' or child care from early childhood development.

BC NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP)

bc.ndp.ca/upload/20050413121650_NDPPlatform2005.pdf

What they say:

When last in office, the BC NDP introduced the Child Care BC Act that made 15,000 school age child care spaces available to families for \$7 a day. The Act included a 4 year roll-out plan to extend this type of funding to other licensed centre and family based child care services.

The BC NDP platform promises to:

1. Create affordable, quality, child care to help all parents earn a living and improve early childhood development opportunities for BC children.
2. Introduce legislation to enshrine a made-in-BC interpretation of the four key principles (Quality, Universality, Accessibility and Developmentally focused) the federal government has attached to its child care funding and add a distinct fifth principle of Accountability.
3. Ensure that all federal dollars targeted for child care are spent on child care.
4. Work with the federal government to support the universal child care program now being planned by the federal government.

How it stacks up against our Child Care Plan

The BC NDP **has** promised to

- Enact Child Care Legislation that enshrines 5 key principles of a BC child care system.
- Support a universal child care program.
- Spend federal funds on child care.
- Recognize that child care promotes early childhood development AND parental participation in the labour force.

The BC NDP **has not** promised to:

- Enshrine public or non-profit child care management in legislation. Their definition of 'quality' does commit them to focus on strengthening the quality non-profit sector.
- Restore provincial funding cuts to child care.
- Develop and implement a detailed action plan for building a universal system.

In short, the BC NDP Platform makes a commitment to some of the key elements required to move towards a publicly funded system but does not include a detailed action plan or a commitment to restore provincial funding cuts.

BC GREEN PARTY

www.greenparty.bc.ca/GreenBook2005.pdf

What they say:

The BC Green Party Platform promises to:

1. Work with the federal government to develop a **provincial childcare strategy** that includes non-profit, professional daycare, increased support for at-home parents, early childhood education, family health, and basic child nutrition.

The BC Green Party Platform also addresses pre-school under the heading of "Ensuring Children Are Ready to Learn" and promises to:

1. Prioritize the spending of federal dollars for universally accessible and affordable pre-school education to areas where the need is greatest, such as inner-city schools.
2. Move towards qualifications-based pay parity between pre-school and other teachers in the school system.

How it stacks up against our Child Care Plan

The BC Greens **have** promised to develop a provincial childcare strategy that includes non-profit, professional child care. The implication is that they will use federal funds for this strategy.

The BC Greens **have not** promised to:

- Enact Child Care Legislation that enshrines the principles of a BC child care system.
- Move to a universal child care system.
- Use all projected federal funds on child care.
- Restore provincial funding cuts to child care.
- Develop and implement a detailed action plan for building a universal system.

In short, the BC Greens are prepared to move forward on child care as part of a federal initiative. However, their focus on pre-school as a key way to address learning readiness will not meet the needs of many working families and does not adequately acknowledge the role that all quality child care and early childhood educators play in promoting healthy childhood development.