

October 2010

Dear Member of Legislative Assembly,

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and the Early Childhood Educators of BC are pleased to share with you the enclosed **Briefing Note on our *Emerging Plan for an Integrated System of Early Care and Learning in BC***.

The Emerging Plan responds to the growing role ministries of education are playing in the early years. This is an international, national and local trend, reflected in BC by the move to full school day Kindergarten for 5 year olds and a promise of 'pre-kindergarten' for 3 and 4 year olds to follow.

While the extension of universal, publicly funded free services to young children is welcome, we are concerned that BC is proceeding without a strategy to include the child care sector or meet the needs of all families – particularly working families. So, we are taking the initiative of using our voices to inform the change now underway.

Our emerging plan builds on what is already well established. Families need access to quality care. Quality child care IS early learning. Current policies and approaches do not meet the need of BC's children and families. Public spending on the early years is a wise social and economic investment. Quality matters. Rather than repeat this evidence, our Emerging Plan offers a **new and creative approach** to how BC can and should integrate early care and learning.

Highlights of the Emerging Plan include:

- A new home for all community and school based early care and learning programs for young children in the **Ministry of Education**.
- A new **Early Care and Learning Act** to enshrine the rights of young children and families to access care and learning services that meet their needs.
- **Early Care and Learning Plans** developed by local Boards of Education with stakeholders involvement.
- **Early Years Centres** – an alternative, more appropriate approach than part day pre-Kindergarten – where young children participate in full or part time early care and learning programs while families are at work, study or home.
- A process to **integrate existing group and family child care and pre-school** into Early Years Centres.
- An **enhanced approach to Kindergarten and Grade 1** with ECEs joining teachers as part of the staff team.
- A **workforce development plan** that moves ECEs towards parity with teachers while respecting their unique expertise.
- A **way to get from here to there** that, with accountability measures in place, welcomes existing providers into the new system.

We hope you will review our Emerging Plan and the background documents at <http://cccabc.bc.ca/cccabcdocs/integrated.html>. We would be pleased to provide a briefing for your caucus or relevant committees of the legislature. If you are interested – please contact us at [info@cccabc.bc.ca](mailto:info@cccabc.bc.ca). We are excited about the Plan and confident that it can move BC forward with a new system that meets the needs of children and families. We hope you share our enthusiasm and look forward to your responses and support.

Sincerely,

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC  
Early Childhood Educators of BC