



Working together for a community based, non-profit child care system that is high quality, affordable, accessible, publicly funded and accountable.

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Media Release – 2010 BC Budget Ignores Economic Benefits of Child Care

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is dismayed to see yet again a government that prides itself on its economic expertise failing to take advantage of the most significant engine of economic growth available – investment in publicly-funded, quality, affordable child care.

Today the BC Budget highlights a phased in approach to full school day Kindergarten for five year olds starting in September 2010. This expansion of universally accessible, publicly-funded education is a move in the right direction yet does nothing for working families with younger children.

It is amazing to us that the Ministry of Education’s plan to improve school readiness includes establishing neighbourhood preschools for 3 and 4 year olds while over 90,000 existing child care spaces in BC are withering on the vine – starved of the public funding they need today to support children’s early learning AND working parents.

The vague reference to \$26 million in funds for child care subsidies over the next three years raises more questions than it answers and does nothing to address today’s crisis:

1. There are only enough regulated child care spaces for 15% of children under 12 in BC – leaving too many parents unable to work and achieve their career goals, and too many children in situations where the quality of their early care and learning is unknown. Wait times for licensed child care are years long.
2. After housing, child care is the second highest cost facing BC families. In 2010, a Metro Vancouver family with a 4-year-old and a 2-year old in full-time child care will pay \$23,700 annually in fees – if they can find a space.

The BC government should know that publicly-funded, quality, affordable child care:

- **Grows the economy:** *Every dollar invested in child care programs increases GDP by \$2.30 — one of the strongest levels of short-term economic stimulus of all sectors.*
- **Creates jobs:** *Investing \$1 million in the child care sector generates almost 40 jobs — at least 40% higher than the next closest industry, and four times the jobs generated by investing in construction activity.*
- **Pays for itself:** *Even in the short term, more than 90% of the cost of hiring child care workers goes back to governments as increased revenue. Over the long term, every dollar invested in quality child care programs returns \$2.54 in benefits to society.*