

Media Release – May 15th 2012

Advocates Call For Moratorium on Tax-Dollars for Commercial Child Care Expansion

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is calling on the BC government to stop funding the expansion of new big-box for-profit commercial child care businesses with taxpayer dollars.

The CCCABC has written to Mary McNeil, Minister of Children and Family Development, to request that she immediately implement a moratorium on new approvals of Child Care Operating Funds (CCOF) for commercial child care chains operating in our province, says CCCABC spokesperson Sharon Gregson.

“The lack of child care spaces is a crisis for BC parents but it will not be solved by the expansion of big-box for-profit commercial child care chains,” said Gregson. “Why would we want tax-payer dollars providing profits for commercial child care providers? The Coalition believes we must ensure **our focus is on the best use of public funds so that every penny is spent in ways that put children and families first.**”

“High demand for child care spaces and low supply is the problem but the solution is not more commercial child care with ridiculously high fees” says Giselle the parent of a toddler. “We need the \$10/day child care child care plan proposed by the Coalition to provide affordable and accessible child care.”

The current crisis is highlighted by commercial child care chain Kids & Company who recently announced their Vancouver fees for toddlers would be increasing from \$1,550/month to \$1,915/per month, an increase of 24%. This program was already at the top of the 2011 fee range in Vancouver where the median monthly fee for toddlers is \$1,155. Kids & Company fees for new enrolling toddlers – almost \$23,000 annually - are beyond the reach of most BC families. Even the few low-income families eligible for the government subsidy of \$7,620 annually would still have to pay \$15,360 (\$22,980 – \$7,620) to participate in this program.

Mab Oloman, long time child care advocate, says currently commercial child care chains operating in British Columbia demonstrate different marketing approaches but none effectively address the access and affordability issues faced by BC families seeking child care. For example one is buying up existing services and rebranding them while the other two are priced at the top of the parent fee scale and out of reach of the majority of BC families.

Gregson says the solution to the crisis is the Coalition’s \$10/day Plan, which calls for a Public System of Integrated Early Care & Learning that would cap fees, improve wages for workers and create more child care spaces across the province. See www.cccabc.bc.ca/plan

----- 30 -----

Contact: Sharon Gregson 604-505-5725 or info@cccabc.bc.ca

Minister’s letter: http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/cccabcdocs/pdf/CCCABC_Moratorium_CCOF_May12.pdf

Backgrounder: http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/cccabcdocs/pdf/CCCABC_Moratorium_CCOF_backgrounder.pdf

MCFD Child Care Operating Funds: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare/pdfs/ccof_rates_payment.pdf