

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

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

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THRONE SPEECH BETRAYS BC CHILDREN AND FAMILIES Feb. 14, 2006

“Today’s Throne Speech is shockingly silent on action for child care,” says Susan Harney, Chair of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. “Last September, the Premier signed a child care agreement with the federal government. He made a public commitment to improve access to quality child care in BC. Yet, six months later child care has fallen off the agenda.”

Under the federal-provincial Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care, BC was to receive over \$600 million from the federal government over 5 years. For its part, BC promised to release a BC Child Care Action Plan by Jan. 31. 2006.

The new federal government now says it will cancel existing child care agreements in early 2007 and this has brought BC action on child care to a full stop. The results of BC’s community consultation on child care held in the Fall are still not available and Jan. 31 has come and gone without a BC Child Care Action Plan.

“The Premier was silent during the federal election when Stephen Harper said he would cancel the agreements – and he has been silent ever since.” says Stephanie Seaman, a Vancouver front line child care worker. “Other Premiers are standing up for the children of their provinces. They are calling on Harper to honour the Agreements. Don’t our children and families deserve quality, affordable child care too?”

Even after the Vice Chair of the government’s own Provincial Child Care Council resigned over the province’s silence, Campbell and his government are acting as if they are off the hook. But families across the province are clear that BC must move forward on child care with or without federal funds.

“Over their first term in office, this government cut \$40 million from their own annual spending on child care.” notes Lynell Anderson, CGA and child care financial analyst. “To date, they have used federal money to backfill some of this deficit. All of the recent increases in child care spending, including increases to the child care subsidy program, have been paid for with federal funds.”

“We will hold this government accountable for their claim that they are improving child care. We expect them to work with other provinces to save the child care agreements. And, we expect them to fill any gaps left should the federal agreements be cancelled.” Harney concludes.