

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

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

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Clerk and Members of the Standing Committee on Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada

September 6, 2002

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C. (CCCABC) is pleased to submit this written brief to the Standing Committee on Finance for its pre-budget discussions.

Representatives of the CCCABC would be pleased to meet with you when hearings take place in Vancouver. Please contact Dianne Goldberg, via e mail address info@cccabc.bc.ca, by Fax at 604-709-5662, or by phone at 604-709-5661.

Sincerely,
Dianne Goldberg, Director
On Behalf of the Board of Directors
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.

**2002 Pre Budget Consultation
to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance
September, 2002**

**Submitted by
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.**
3 rd floor, 210 West Broadway,
Vancouver, B.C.
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Introduction

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC) is a voluntary non-profit organization of parents, child care providers, interested citizens, and community organizations.

We support:

- The development of a comprehensive, accessible and affordable non-profit child care system in B.C. and across Canada.
- The right of every child and family to quality child care in their community.
- A range of inclusive child care choices including licensed, regulated family and centre-based care.
- Stable, adequate government funding to sustain quality child care programs.
- Child care worker's rights to wages and working conditions which reflect the level of training, responsibility and value of work performed.

We are pleased to submit this written response to the pre budget discussions of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance.

What do Canadians already know?

A growing body of research confirms that the quality of care that children receive during their early years affects them throughout their lives. We know that:

- adequate income and a healthy start in life have positive long term impacts and promote the healthy growth and development of our community's children;
- poverty is a major problem in our country with approximately 1 out of every 5 children living below the poverty line and access to high quality child care would be a key component of an effective anti-poverty strategy;
- while at least 65% of all children have mothers who are in the paid labour force, only 10% of all children have access to provincially/territorially regulated child care which meets minimum regulatory standards regarding the safety and health of our children;
- the current cost of regulated child care is unaffordable for the majority of families in Canada and the very children who could most benefit from access to enriched experiences are least likely to receive them;

- the current service delivery of child care is becoming more fragmented and fragile and unable to meet the varied needs of families and communities; and
- effective child care services that meet needs of families, communities and society:
 - support adults in their caregiving/nurturing roles;
 - enable adults to participate in the labour force, educational and training programs; and
 - contribute to women's capacity for a more equitable role in society.

What are Canadians saying?

Polls have informed us that:

- a significant majority, 90% of Canadians, believe that high quality child care is important to ensure Canada's social and economic well-being;
- a significant majority, 81% of Canadians, believe that governments should develop a plan for a comprehensive child care system.

The next federal budget.

Canada and the U.S. are amongst the only highly developed industrialized countries in the world that do not have publicly funded, sustainable child care systems. While over the last couple of years the Canadian government has developed some initiatives with a focus on early childhood, the implementation of such initiatives has not met the Social Union Framework goal of assuring access to essential social programs, such as child care, in each province/territory.

Recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C. strongly urges the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance to:

- 1. Develop a federal budget for 2003/04 that will enhance the health of Canadian families and communities by reinvesting tax dollars to implement a federally funded, comprehensive child care system that will enable all children, regardless of their families' income level or geographical location or employment status, to access a range of regulated, high quality, financially sustainable child care programs in their communities.**
- 2. Develop a policy framework to build a pan-Canadian child care system in partnership with provincial/territorial governments who will work with the municipalities and community based non-profit organizations to design and implement a regionally responsive child care system that is comprehensive; inclusive; high quality; not for profit; and accountable for public funds.**

3. **Designate the federal budgeted funds solely for a publicly funded child care system in each of the five years in order to ensure that these funds are available to the provinces/territories that commit to the policy framework, timelines and principles in the policy framework to move Canada towards the important next steps of providing a publicly funded child care system for all.**

What is required?

Like others, we are calling on the federal government to make a substantial investment and commit to a 5 year action plan to develop a comprehensive child care system with a new expenditure of at least \$2 billion in year one, and a further \$500 million in each of the following four years, for a total of \$4 billion annually by 2008/09.

Sources:

- The Early Years Study: Reversing the Brain Drain, Dr. F. Mustard and Hon. M.N. McCain, 1998
- Partners in Quality, Canadian Child Care Federation, 1999
- Angus Reid, 1999