



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

Elections and Child Care — It's up to US

June 2008

In the coming year, British Columbians will go to the polls to elect new municipal, provincial and federal governments. While there are many important issues – families, early childhood educators and child care advocates will put child care on the top of the agenda for every candidate seeking our vote. Here's why:

- The evidence is in – the early years matter. The pathways for social, emotional, cognitive and physical development begin long before children walk through a Kindergarten door. Quality child care promotes healthy childhood development but poor care can do harm.
- Mothers are in the labour force and we are here to stay. In 2005, 64.3% of BC mothers whose youngest child was 0-2 and 75.7% of BC mothers whose youngest child was 3-5 were at work. In Canada, 82.6% of women between the ages of 25-44 are in the labour force. Their families and our economy depend on them to be here.
- BC faces a growing labour shortage but access to quality, affordable child care is the key barrier for parents who want or need to work. Many BC municipalities now realize that they cannot attract young families unless there is child care. And, a growing number of Chambers of Commerce are putting child care at the top of their list too.
- The child care policies of our federal and provincial government have clearly failed. Child care is in a crisis. Fees are up, wages are down and wait lists are years long. And, while the BC government claims they are creating more spaces, existing spaces are at risk of closing and new ones may not open because of a critical staff shortage.
- The current federal government's decision to replace dedicated child care transfer payments to provinces with a \$100 a month taxable family allowance has not helped create spaces, has not made child care affordable and has not improved quality.
- To make matters worse, BC was the only province to respond to the loss of dedicated federal child care funds with yet more cuts to BC child care. Now, they are using public funds to welcome corporate child care chains into BC through new capital grants.
- BC continues to pursue a dangerous policy divide between early learning and child care. While they are exploring All Day Kindergarten for 5, 4 and 3 year olds they have yet to demonstrate a commitment to universal, publicly funded programs that are developmentally appropriate and seamless for young children and that meet the needs of working families.
- In spite of years of talk - Canada still spends less than 19 other countries, including the US, on early learning and child care. Out of 14 countries, Canadian 3-5 year olds still have the lowest rate of access to early learning and care programs.
- Child care may be the 'best' worst example of how our governments' reliance on market based individual strategies does not take care of the collective needs of children, families and communities.
- After 30 years of research, advocacy and lived experience – we still don't have a universal, high quality, publicly funded, community controlled child care system.

We know we can count on teachers across BC to help make sure that in the coming elections – children, families and communities finally get the child care system they need and deserve.

For more information on Child Care Solutions see <http://www.cccabc.bc.ca/cccabdocs/index.html>