



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

January 5, 2012

MEDIA RELEASE – Child Care Year in Review

Contrary to the Ministry of Children and Family Development December 23rd 2011 media release – all is NOT well with child care in British Columbia. The truth is that the child care situation in BC is an unmitigated crisis. There are too few child care spaces, and those families lucky enough to find a spot face enormous costs. Monthly fees are as high as \$1,200 per child – making child care a family's second highest expense, right after housing. College trained Early Childhood Educators face poverty level wages, few benefits and no pension.

Despite attempts from the Minister of Education to suggest they are meeting the needs of BC's youngest children, Sheila Davidson from the Coalition of Child Care Advocates points out, "there has been almost nothing but bad news for working parents with young children in 2011."

1. August 2011 – Fewer low income families can afford child care when government lowers the net income cut-off for a full subsidy from \$33,300 to \$21,480 per year for 5 year olds.
2. September 2011 – Health and safety of children is undermined when government eliminates the \$2,000 Minor Capital Grant to child care centres. This follows their elimination of the Major Capital Grant program that previously created new spaces.
3. October 2011 – Kaatza Child Care Centre in Lake Cowichan and other child care centres across BC close, as operators cannot sustain their vital services in the face of so little support from the provincial government.
4. December 2011 – Child Care and pre-school non-profit societies only receive 50% of last year's Gaming Grants from the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

Mary McNeil, Minister of Children and Family Development, cites full school day Kindergarten, StrongStart and other drop-in programs as evidence that BC children and their families are well served. But, as any working parent knows, full school day Kindergarten – from 9am to 3pm – does not cover the full working day. And StrongStart and drop-in programs require that a caregiver attend with their child. Still, the provincial government and its allies seem determined to ignore the plight of parents needing quality, affordable, accessible child care.

The good news is that there IS a solution to the current child care crisis that thousands of British Columbians support. See the solution – the Community Plan for a Public System of Integrated Early Care and Learning – at www.cccabc.bc.ca/plan.

Let's hope in 2012 the provincial government and the opposition decide to do the right thing for children, families, communities and the economy in BC by moving forward with the Plan.

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