

Mission

Faculty, students and staff with young children face a particular challenge of finding adequate childcare to support their families, their education and their careers. While childcare facilities on campus are excellent, they come nowhere near to meeting the demand.

As a result, we have formed a group of concerned members of the UVic community – the University Childcare Action Group – to organize a multifaceted awareness campaign with the long term goal of creating more childcare spaces on campus and of creating a more family-friendly environment at UVic.

LINKS

Academic Women's Caucus:
<http://web.uvic.ca/awc/childcare>

UCAG Facebook group:
<http://tinyurl.com/lu3gsp>

UVic Childcare services:
<http://childcare.uvic.ca>

Coalition of Childcare Advocates of BC:
<http://www.cccabc.bc.ca>

Victoria Childcare Referral Services:
<http://www.childcarevictoria.org>

Kids in Victoria:
<http://www.kidsinvictoria.com>

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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UVic Childcare Action Group*

A Joint Effort of the Students, Staff, and Faculty
for Adequate Childcare at UVic.

Ways to Get Involved

ANSWER A SURVEY ON CHILDCARE:

In the first two weeks of September we will be conducting a survey of the childcare needs and experiences of students, faculty and staff at UVic. The survey will be distributed widely across campus, and response are anonymous. Please follow this link and take a moment to fill it in, so we can get a clearer picture of childcare issues in the UVic community! <http://tinyurl.com/lubg58>

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

The UCAG is mounting a major letter-writing campaign, aimed at bringing scores of individual stories, needs and concerns to the attention of the administration. If you have not been contacted but would like to write a letter in support of our initiative – commenting on how insufficient childcare has affected your work or studies, or that of your colleagues or fellow students – please write to President David Turpin (dturpin@uvic.ca) and Board of Directors Chair Ray Protti (usec3@uvic.ca) or get in touch with us for a template letter.

COME FOR A "PLAY IN" SEPTEMBER 24.

The UCAG warmly invites you and your child(ren) to a "Play-In" called "Don't Burst Our Bubble"! Come rain or shine, bring your kids and join us on September 24th from 3-5 pm by the main fountain of the McPherson Library for fun, play, bubbles and more! This is a time to get involved, celebrate your children and draw attention to the need for more childcare spaces on Campus. This is an important issue affecting all students, faculty and staff - our little ones could be future UVic students too!



*The UCAG is supported by the GSS, PEA, CUPE 4163 and 951, the Academic Women's Caucus, the UVSS, and the Faculty Association.

Did You Know...

- The waiting list for UVic childcare is well over two years, particularly for infants and toddlers: some parents who place their children on the waitlist the day they are born are not called until their children are kindergarten age, and some are never called.
- The situation has worsened recently; the Harper government's cancellation of the Liberals' new childcare policy resulted in significant cuts to childcare funding in British Columbia, and in March 2009, three major childcare centres in Victoria announced that they will be forced to close, which will mean the loss of an additional 100 spaces in the city.
- Although childcare facilities at SFU and UBC are much more extensive than at other universities in Canada, UVic's facilities are small by comparison. SFU (comparable in size) has 84 spaces for infants and toddlers (4 months to 3 years), 100 spaces for children 3-5, and an additional 50 spaces for afterschool care (a total of 234 spaces). UVic has only 38 spaces for children under 3, 50 spaces for children 3-5, and 50 spaces for afterschool care (a total of 138 spaces). Not surprisingly, the wait to get into SFU childcare is only approximately six months.



Childcare Realities: the following are excerpts from letters written by UVic students and faculty

“The limited number of daycare spaces, and more particularly the lack of part-time space, has created significant stress for my family. My partner has been unable to work outside the home. The challenges were made more acute by the fact that like many new faculty, we did not have any family support or a significant social support network to draw on for assistance. We seriously considered leaving Victoria because of the childcare challenges.” — faculty member

“When I moved here to begin my MA in 2008 I was pleased with much that Victoria had to offer. However, trying to find childcare was another matter. I spent weeks trying to find something...anything...anyone who could care for my two children (aged 8 & 9). The childcare spaces at UVic and the afterschool program at their school were full (and people warned me of long wait lists but could not offer alternatives). I placed ads on craigslist, at their school, around campus, at local high schools, churches and community bulletin boards. Until I found care there were times when I had to miss class, leave early and occasionally bring my kids to class with me. My professors were very understanding about this but it was difficult. When I eventually began to get responses for my ads, I was shocked at the rates people were asking. The second caregiver I hired I was amazing with my kids, but only a segment of her wage was covered by the Childcare Subsidy I qualify for. When she moved on I had to begin the search again. Frankly, it is exhausting and it is a huge distraction from both our family time and my studies. It is also very expensive which has an impact on other areas of our life, forcing us to forgo many recreational and cultural opportunities... I have also had to forgo conferences, guest lectures and information sessions because childcare simply wasn't available, nor as I mentioned, affordable. One of the features that draws many students to this institution is the quality of life here. Without adequate childcare, this quality of life is not available to everyone.” — grad student

“Two weeks before my job interview for a UVic faculty position in 2005, I placed my then 18-month old son on the UVic childcare waitlist. I then delayed my start date for 9 months to ensure I would have childcare. However, my son was not offered a place at UVic until he entered Kindergarten in Fall 2008. Finding care in the community was also difficult. For the first 4 months of my position at UVic, I had no childcare whatsoever. During this period, I worked at most 50% time and with at best 30% productivity due to the stress of managing work and childcare. I faced similar challenges again for two months in Fall 2008 when I was unable to find after-school care. [...] If I have a second child, I will need to consider whether it is worth moving somewhere else, where reasonably priced childcare is available.” — faculty member