

Child care crisis not a priority for this government

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The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC is disappointed that once again the provincial government has failed to recognize the importance of child care as an integral part of a comprehensive economic stimulus package. "The decision of this government to fail to respond to the crisis in child care in BC demonstrates its lack of support for working families," says Susan Harney, Chairperson of CCCABC. While the government claims to be investing in generating new jobs, how can families work or access training opportunities when they can't access child care for their children?

"While the budget recognizes that families are worried about paying their bills and worried about their children and the future of their families, nothing in this budget addresses the high fees for child care or long wait lists," Harney says. "When will this government recognize that spending on infrastructure should include the development of a child care system, a legacy that would provide critical supports to families for generations?"

B.C. families currently pay some of the highest fees for child care services in the world according to a recent United Nations report. And a lack of spaces mean that only about 15% of BC's young children can access it. This budget does nothing for the families who are currently on wait lists of up to 2 years.

While the budget does provide for a \$25 million dollar increase to subsidies for low income families, child care advocates maintain that subsidies alone will only continue to provide band aid solutions. Economic supports for families are needed and welcomed but they do not create a child care system nor address the crisis. High parent fees mean the subsidy amounts are often insufficient. "When families have to find an additional \$300 or \$400 dollars a month from an already stretched low income to top up subsidy rates it's just impossible to do," says Harney.

Parents across BC need government to invest in a child care system that would see parent fees reduced or capped, the creation of new community owned spaces and increases to wages for early childhood educators.

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