

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC responds to the Provincial Budget

February 2005

Good News? Not for child care.

With the significant funding cuts and detrimental policy changes introduced by the BC government over the last four years, most BC families have had no real choice as they try to cobble together arrangements to meet their child care needs. And child care service providers have had no real choice as they scramble to provide quality care with inadequate resources and limited capacity to meet family and community demands for regulated, affordable child care.

Unfortunately, BC's Budget 2005 (presented in the legislature on February 15th) neither indicates a commitment to reverse the funding cuts and policy decisions of the past four years nor reflects any significant plans to lay the foundation for building a publicly funded child care system.

While advocates and the majority of families view child care as a cornerstone of early childhood development, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Children and Family Development's service plan (2005-2008) is silent on the role that quality child care plays in supporting both children and parents.

Despite the commitment in 2005/06 of increased federal child care funding and substantial new federal child care dollars promised for the next five years, it looks like BC's spending priorities for 2005/06 will be more of the same – targeting child care subsidies to some families; developing a new electronic child care subsidy administration system; and more spending on unregulated child care.

The outstanding question remains: will the BC government pour significant funds into quick spending initiatives that are disconnected from any evidence-based plan for promoting quality, accessibility, stability, or accountability as they have in the last couple of months in their pre election mode?

[\[Leftovers due to the lack of a child care plan? Largesse leading up to the provincial election?\]](#)

Obviously if this is where BC is headed for the next fiscal year, our children and communities will be left behind, still waiting – waiting for a child care plan that reflects adequate and stable funding, is accountable, and is based upon the building blocks that will ensure quality, universality, accessibility, developmental programming and inclusion.