

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT TO THE AGM

February 23, 2001

We will, no doubt remember the year 2000 in many ways – “The year of the 10,000 letters”, “The year of beginnings”, “The year when we were finally heard”, “The year of no sleep and constant exhaustion”. And, all these would be true. In fact, when we look back on this most significant year we will all be flooded with a mixture of images and emotions, dedication, hesitation, disbelief, compromise and victory. All of us in our individual communities will remember the campaigns, the anticipation and how the excitement grew. We will remember that British Columbians stood strongly together and did what was right for children and their families. It will be a year that is recorded forever in history when we became the 2<sup>nd</sup> jurisdiction in North America to provide publicly funded child care.

It was a year that seemed packed with campaigns and meetings at the local and provincial levels. We visited a record number of politicians (and political hopefuls) around the province. We collaborated, we schemed, we pushed ourselves until the energy was gone and then we found some more. For me this will be a year that is remembered with pride when I reflect on the tremendous amount of work that was accomplished by our Board and membership around the province as we continued to lobby for an affordable, accessible, publicly funded, accountable, not for profit child care system.

Certainly the bulk of our work during the year 2000 continues to focus on the three target areas we identified as priorities for our organization in our ongoing project funded by Status of Women (B.C. / Yukon):



- support to the Child Care Advocacy Forum
- support to Parents for Child Care to help in the development of a strong parent's voice
- the development of a provincial advocates' network

Reflecting back on the year's activities here's a full (but not complete) list of some of the activities of the CCCABC Board for the year 2000 ( in no particular order).

Ongoing Conference calls to CCRR's across the province to share information and begin to formalize our provincial network.

A letter writing campaign and week of action responding to Ramsey's "Budget 2000 Choices and Challenges". Our focus and "slogan" was a provincial and national letter writing campaign calling on the federal government to "spend more money on child care".

Participation in a strong lobby of the leadership candidates at the NDP leadership convention. Petitioned delegates to sign pledges for a publicly funded child care system.

Sent a representative to the Minister's Implementation Table for School Age Child Care. We will be sending a representative to the upcoming Implementation Table for Phase II of the funding.

Formalized new accounting procedures and new reporting mechanisms for the Coalition Board.

Lobbied for an identified "advocates position" on the Minister's Child Care Council.

Working closely with our sister organizations at the national level, we participated in many Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada's projects / initiatives including "Sign On for Canada's Kids". The Coalition donated \$500.00 to the CCAAC for financial assistance during a year that has proven to be challenging for the CCAAC. The Coalition continues to send a B.C. representative to the CCAAC's Board meetings.

Sent a representative to the Child Care Human Resource Round Table in Ottawa in April.

On April 13<sup>th</sup> the Board met for a single issue meeting where Coalition principles related to the new funding program were reconfirmed, our commitment to a publicly funded, accountable not for profit, regulated child care system.

We continue to liaise with our Labour contacts. I am pleased to report that child care remains a regular focus in various Labour materials / newsletters. Their support throughout this year for in kind and financial assistance is appreciated and recognized.

We continue to maintain our membership in SPARC working with their staff on a number of child care related projects.

Coalition Board members were strong participants in the November 14<sup>th</sup> Candidates Meeting on Child Care at Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House (Vancouver). CCCABC Board members participated in the organization of the evening as well as staffing various tables at the event.

Promoted a number of strategies regarding the National Children's Agenda "Children can't wait" calling on federal dollars to be transferred to the province immediately. Worked hard to lobby for a division of federal dollars that would have a positive impact on child care and support child care as the centre of healthy, affordable early childhood services.

Wrote letters regarding the new fee based Kindergarten proposal in the Lower Mainland and later participated in round table discussions hosted by the BCTF.

Continue to be a strong and active participant on the Board of First Call.

Met with each of the Child Care Minister's during a time of great change.

Held our annual Student Advocacy forum in May, a successful event that provides advocacy training to over 100 Lower Mainland students in continuing education programs.

In September, we participated in a Forum on family child care to help develop guiding principles for the Advocacy Forum regarding the inclusion of family child care in the new public funding.

In April we hosted a tremendously successful evening featuring Jan Pullinger, then the Minister of MSDES. That night at Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House over 100 advocates came together to voice their concerns, applaud the government for its investment in children and celebrate our recent victory.

Throughout the year we continued to support various activities and celebrations at Westcoast including their AGM, a golf tournament and other committees. The Coalition continues to send a representative to the Westcoast Board.

We continue to work closely with Parents for Child Care sharing two Board members, Sharon Gregson and Necole Andersen.

Our Bumper Sticker campaign “Child Care: The Place to Start” was so popular that our bumper stickers found their way around the country as far east as Newfoundland and north to the Yukon.

Various submissions were submitted to Standing Committees of the House of Commons regarding financial policy that would affect child care.

Developed various papers in response to events as they unfolded.

And lastly, the Board continued to meet on (at least) a monthly basis.

Goals for 2001 include the development of an advocates web site, and an increase in lobbying for the highest accountability for the new funding program. The upcoming provincial election will certainly create many opportunities for campaigns and meetings with candidates as well as hard work to ensure that the publicly funded program is not lost.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Coalition Board members and friends of the Coalition who attend regular Board meetings for their enthusiasm, their friendship, their ability to sustain each other in times of doubt and most of all for their unwavering conviction that British Columbia’s publicly funded child care system must be a system which first meets the needs of children and their families.

Respectfully submitted,  
Susan Harney

## **CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE**

Dear friends,

Since writing this annual report some significant changes have occurred, most importantly the proclamation of Bill 2 – the Child Care BC Act. ( More information is included in “Child Care BC is now the law!” )

Although the BC Liberals have said that they will repeal this law, if they are elected, we must work hard to ensure that affordable, quality child care is available to ALL of B.C.'s children.

This May we will celebrate together the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CHILD CARE MONTH. Please use this time to organize community events that will highlight Bill 2, attend local candidates meetings and keep child care on the election platform.

**How can you participate in Child Care Month?  
Here are some ways to CELEBRATE, EDUCATE and ADVOCATE!**

- \* Host an Open House at your centre or visit another nearby that you haven't been to.
- \* Call your local paper and arrange with them to do a story (with pictures) of your centre.
- \* Invite other preschools, daycares and/or family daycares to join you for a snack or a picnic.
- \* Ask your local mall, bank, library or civic centre to display your children's art work.
- \* Parade through your neighbourhood with banners, bikes, wagons, strollers, hats, balloons and musical instruments.
- \* Become active with other parents and caregivers and let your community know about child care.
- \* Host an alumni dinner; as a fundraiser or just for fun.
- \* Adopt a local politician: Send them information about your program, invite them to your special events and make them aware of your program, services and issues.
- \* Offer a parent meeting with guest speakers, a film, or just a get-together potluck.
- \* Ask the Mayor and Council to proclaim Child Care Month in your municipality.
- \* Request that your municipality allow your program free access in Child Care Month to public facilities such as pools, skating rinks, zoos, or children's events.
- \* Invite your local elementary or high school to your centre for a snack and return the visit!
- \* Be creative (we know you are) and come up with ideas of your own.

**I Vote  
Child  
Care**

**If you have a successful event or something in the media – please let us know about it.  
Thanks and have fun!**

## WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF CHILD CARE MONTH -SO GLAD YOU ASKED!

Recently, the Coalition has received several requests from members and friends asking about the origins of Child Care Month.

These questions provided a welcome opportunity to look into our archives and see what we could find. Happily, we discovered a summary of the “early years” of this well established tradition, marking the highlights and evolution of Child Care Month. With much gratitude to Peter Ashmore for documenting the chronology, we can now honour and respect the history. In brief, this is what we have learnt about our roots!

In September 1981, Mike Harcourt – the then Mayor of Vancouver – suggested that the Coalition select a time to be proclaimed as “Daycare Week” and organize workshops, festivities and publications to focus attention on daycare issues.

May 1982 marked the launch of this tradition with the theme “Sharing The Caring”, the Coalition sponsored a lunchtime series on a range of child care topics and hosted a community picnic and rally. Activities were also organized in other lower mainland municipalities as well as Victoria and Williams Lake.

Over the next few years, community involvement across BC continued to grow as we rallied around the themes “Quality Child Care is a Vital Community Service” and “Our Survival is on the Line.” In Vancouver, the week was marked by “Daycare Fairs” held at Langara College and a street parade that drew over 1000 participants in 1984.

Through the late 80’s, the focus of Daycare Week became more advocacy oriented with letter writing campaigns, our first *Child Care Advocacy Training Institute* which drew participants from around the province and presentations from both federal and provincial politicians. A number of municipal councils issued proclamations to build a stronger profile in support of daycare and those who provided these services. During the years, our themes included:

- \* A New Deal For Daycare
- \* Child Care Is Choice
- \* Working Together For Real Child Care Alternatives
- \* Yours For Better Child Care
- \* Direct Operating Grants For Child Care

With the start of the 90’s decade, Daycare Week became Child Care Month. This name change reflected more inclusive language and an opportunity for more community-based activity around the province Child Care Month featured posters designed by Vancouver graphic artist Bernie Lyon and broad based mailouts of child care fact sheets and suggestion sheets highlighting ways to mark the occasion.

In the early 90's Child Care Month was marked at conferences of the then BC Preschool Teachers Association, celebrated by Western Canada Family Child Care Association through their ever popular Teddy bear Tea parties and highlighted within the work of Westcoast Child Care resource Centre. Our provincial government also became active participants using Child Care Month as a time to introduce new initiatives and distribute public awareness posters. To help spread our message shopping malls across the province became widely used venues for displays and information tables.

Throughout, the Coalition sponsored a variety of events to celebrate, educate and advocate. From 'Celebrate The Caregiver' evenings to our 'Advocacy Without Apology' Symposium, the month of May has become a focal point for child care advocates and activists to 'make the case' for a comprehensive system of high quality, affordable and accessible child care services in BC.

May 2001 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Child Care Month! Indeed, it is now a well established tradition and one in which our community should take a great sense of pride.

With the upcoming May 16 provincial election, we urge you to use every possible opportunity to ensure that child care is on the political agenda. Wear your "I Vote Child Care" button, contact candidates in your riding, talk with parents and work to ensure that we retain the gains we have made!

Candidate for Member of the Legislative Assembly  
My Provincial Riding \_\_\_\_\_  
British Columbia, Canada

Dear Candidate,

*I need you to know that Child Care is a vital issue for me in the upcoming provincial election.*

*How I vote on election day will depend on which candidate pledges to take my message to Victoria:*

- ALL children are entitled to quality early childhood experiences and programs.
- Families need choices from a range of quality child care and family supports.
- We must move away from a user-pay system to a publicly funded system.

*As a candidate to be my MLA you should know that:*

- Tax cuts do not create any new child care spaces for children
- Over 70% of women with young children are in the labour force.
- Child Care BC is a good long range plan – don't stop now.
- Research proves that for every dollar we invest in stimulating and nurturing care for children in their early years, there is at least a two dollar return in later years.

*If elected, I urge you to continue to make Child Care a priority in Victoria.*

*Please let me know where you stand on this issue.*

Name (signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_