

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

Working for a non-profit child care system that is high quality, affordable, accessible and accountable.

3rd Floor, 210 West Broadway, Vancouver, British Columbia V5Y 3W2
tel: 604.709.5661 www.cccabc.bc.ca fax: 604.709.5662

Feb 1, 2005

Chair and Board of Governors
Camosun College, Victoria BC
c/o Leslie@camosun.bc.ca

In June 2004, our organization wrote to you, as did many families and community members, to express grave concerns re the potential closure of the Camosun College child care centres.

In our letter we urged the Board of Governors to take immediate steps to ensure that not one more child care space in BC is lost and as a leader in the advanced education system in BC, we strongly urged the Camosun Governors to:

1. Allocate sufficient resources to maintain the two on-site child care services at the College sites.
2. Call on Premier Campbell to ensure that post-secondary institutions have the mandate and resources to support on-site child care services.

In your reply, you updated us on the Board's decisions to sustain the programs for another year. We understand that a Task Force will be presenting a business plan in February, 2005 and decisions will be made re the future of the child care centres.

Needless to say, the needs of children and families are the same as they were in June, 2004 – to have healthy communities and a healthy economy, BC's families must be able to access affordable, high quality, child care.

- On-site child care plays a critical role in giving children quality early learning experiences and in enabling access to post secondary education for their parents.
- On-site child care is particularly important for women who face additional barriers in accessing further education.
- Without access to quality child care, current and prospective students will simply be unable to pursue college programs.
- It will be particularly alarming if we are faced with the loss of programs like Camosun housed in facilities built with public funds [e.g., BC 21] and any losses in quality regulated care will reflect a huge loss to BC taxpayers.

In the June 2004 federal election, the federal Liberal government promised to spend \$5 billion over five years to build "a national early learning and child care program that

would be built upon four key principles of Quality, Universality, Accessibility and Developmental programming.

While we are fully aware that BC government public policy and funding decisions over the last three years continue to make it immensely challenging to sustain affordable, high quality, regulated child care in BC, over the last few weeks, numerous news reports quote Hon Ken Dryden, federal minister responsible for negotiations with the provinces/territories, as stating we are “one step away from having a national child care system”.

The Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC and families in BC are continuing to call on the BC government to develop a five year plan for moving away from a user fee/subsidy system to a publicly funded system based on the principles of Quality, Universality, Accessibility, Developmental programming and Inclusion.

At this time, we urge the Board of Governors to commit to sustaining the Camosun child care programs on a permanent basis and join us in calling on the BC government to:

- restore child care funding to 2001/02 levels and use existing and future federal funds to supplement rather than replace provincial cuts.
- move BC forward in starting to meet the real needs of BC’s children and families
- begin to provide direct public funding to licensed child care programs with accountability measures tied to quality, affordable parent fees and improved wages and working conditions.

Sincerely,

Susan Harney, Chairperson,
On behalf of the Board of Directors

Cc Premier Campbell
Cc Minister Ken Dryden