

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC

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

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April 2, 2007

The Honourable Gordon Campbell
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041, Stn. Prov Govt.
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Campbell:

Are you aware that on March 16th Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre was informed by the Ministry of Children and Family Development that annual funding of \$800,000 for its Provincial Services will be discontinued on April 30, 2007 ... in other words they were given a mere 6 weeks notice?

Mr. Premier, when you were Mayor of Vancouver and Leader of the Opposition you were a Westcoast supporter. You attended annual general meetings to bring greetings in person and many heard you voice your support for Westcoast's fine services. You appeared then to believe in this important provincial service for parents and child care providers. We hope you still do and that you will step in to stop the wastefulness that this funding cut demonstrates.

Over the past almost twenty years, thanks both to provincial funding and the fundraising efforts of volunteers, Westcoast has provided the child care sector with many tools and resources: professional development and training tools such as BC Family Child Care Training and Safe Spaces Bullying Prevention for Preschoolers; resources to assist child care settings with administration and financial management practices; and resources and training programs to address diversity issues. The Westcoast Library, one of the most comprehensive collections of materials related to child development and early childhood education and care west of Ontario, is accessible to residents throughout British Columbia through its on-line catalogue and province-wide lending capacity. The Library is among the services that will be lost as a result of the Child Care Branch's funding decision.

Not only will the loss of these resources be a tragic waste of the years of investment by governments and others, but to sever a service with a mere six week notice is an example of the questionable administrative practices for which the Child Care Branch of the Ministry of Children and Family Development has become infamous. We appeal to you on both these issues.

Will you intervene and ask the Minister of State for Child Care to suspend the dismantling of the Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre? As Chief Operating Officer for the province will you also initiate an enquiry into the administrative practices of the Child Care Branch?

Considering that you have been such a strong supporter of Westcoast we hope that you will give this request a personal response rather than a form letter referring our concerns to the minister responsible.

Yours truly,
Susan Harney, Chairperson