

Child Care

Access to quality, affordable child care is critical for families, particularly women and young children. Due to the lack of sound public policy and adequate public funding, child care is out of reach of most Vancouver families. Yet, the evidence is clear that investment in early care and learning has significant social and economic benefits for all. The City of Vancouver already supports the \$10/Day Plan (Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC, 2014). It is time that the City strengthens its commitment.

Key concern: Parent fees are too high, caregivers' wages too low, and there are only licensed spaces for about 20% of children. These factors make it very difficult for young families to live and work in the City.

City's Incentive: The City should work with communities to ensure that implementation of the \$10/day Child Care Plan becomes a provincial and federal priority. Vancouver and 31 other BC local governments support the \$10/Day Child Care Plan but they do not have the resources or mandate to implement it alone.

We ask candidates and parties to make a commitment to:

- **Work with communities to promote the \$10/Day Child Care Plan.**
- **Tell the provincial and federal governments that Vancouver expects the \$10/Day Child Care Plan to be implemented in BC.**

Women, Girls, and Child Care: Background

Without sufficient operating funds from government, child care operates as a user fee service with limited subsidies for low income families. Vancouver families pay an average of \$15,132 per year for care for their toddler, frequently making child care a family's second highest expense after housing (Westcoast Family Information and Referral, 2013). This cost makes it very hard for young families, especially mothers, to live and work in Vancouver. While the City has worked hard to increase the number of child care spaces, there are still not enough to meet demand and the spaces that do exist are not affordable for many families. College-trained early childhood educators, the vast majority of whom are women, do not earn a living wage and many have no choice but to leave the field for higher paying jobs, which undermines

the quality of care that families and children can access.

Recent Canadian studies show a \$2.54 return for every \$1 invested in quality child care programs (The Centre for Spatial Economics, 2009). Affordable and high quality child care encourages children's healthy development, allows mothers to enter and remain in the labour force, enables families to move out of poverty, and benefits the economy by reducing social costs and increasing tax revenues.

The \$10/Day Child Care Plan offers a concrete solution to the current child care crisis. Almost 2 million British Columbians support the Plan. The Plan includes a system that offers full-time care for \$10/day and part-time care for \$7/day, with no user fees for families with annual incomes under \$40,000. This will move many Vancouver families with children out of poverty. Early childhood educators will receive a living wage. Businesses will benefit from a more stable workforce and from women's increased spending power. Finally, the Vancouver Board of Education will have the resources to deliver quality child care that Vancouver's children and families need and deserve.

References

- Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC. (2014). [The plan for \\$10/day child care.](#)
- The Centre for Spatial Economics. (2009). [Literature review socioeconomic effects and net benefits: Understanding and addressing workforce shortages in early childhood education and care \(ECEC\) project.](#)
- Westcoast Family Information and Referral (2013). [Fee survey: Vancouver licensed group child care.](#)