



March 21, 2018

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL LICENSED CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN BC

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of our two organizations, the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC (CCCABC) and the Early Childhood Educators of BC (ECEBC), we are writing to you at an important time in the evolution of quality, affordable, accessible and inclusive child care in BC.

Like you, we celebrate the historic child care investment in BC Budget 2018, and government's commitment to build a quality, universal child care system. We will also hold government accountable for achieving their first steps - reducing parent fees, through the new Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, investing in the ECE workforce, and adding licensed spaces. These actions are essential to turning the corner on the current child care chaos across BC.

And we must turn the corner, because today's child care chaos is risky for everyone - children, parents, educators and child care providers. Despite your hard work, it's not possible to provide high quality child care that's also affordable for families. Your main source of revenue is parent fees, yet quality programming requires that well-educated, fairly-paid ECEs are your main expenditure.

Clearly, the status quo is not acceptable - children need quality environments, parents need affordable fees, educators need fair wages, and providers need to move away from a model that relies on high parent fees and/or low ECE wages to survive.

The new child care funding is essential to filling the gap between quality and affordability. Among wealthy countries, Canada has the lowest public investment in child care. Before Budget 2018, BC spent far less per licensed space than the weak Canadian average. Only New Brunswick spent less than BC.

To improve quality and affordability, new funding must also be accountable for raising ECE wages and lowering parent fees. The most effective way to achieve these public goals is to increase operating funding provided directly to providers, with accountability. This approach - direct funding to providers, tied to ECE wages and parent fees - is already underway in many Canadian provinces.

We're pleased to see that government is inviting all licensed providers to participate in this new system rather than undermining their hard work by directing new public funding towards the introduction of junior kindergarten, as some suggest.

Government's approach is consistent with our recommendation to build on the valued child care services that have been created and nurtured in communities.

Specifically, to start improving child care quality and affordability promptly in BC, we urge:

(1) the BC government to increase ECE wages in 2018 - while government is creating a workforce development strategy that addresses compensation, a top priority for our organizations is to advance a wage increase for ECEs in 2018. This wage lift should be delivered through an increase in funding provided directly to providers, with accountability.

(2) licensed child care providers to opt-in to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative - as government continues to provide additional information and resolve questions, providers are seeing the benefits for families and for their programs. When child care is affordable, everyone benefits.

We encourage all of you to opt-in to the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, and share your wisdom, skills and experience as we work together to build a quality, universal child care system in BC.

Sincerely,



Susan Harney, Chairperson, Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
Early Childhood Educator and Private Operator (retired)



Charlene Gray, President, Early Childhood Educators of BC
Early Childhood Educator and Senior Manager, Non-profit Organization
