

ECEBC Bulletin
March 5, 2007



In response to the recently announced restoration of \$6 million dollars of cuts to the CCRR programs in the province, ECEBC would like to share our thoughts and considerations with you.

As Claire Trevena (NDP MLA and child care critic) said this week, “childcare advocates should be commended for convincing the BC Liberal government to reverse some of their cuts to Child Care Resource and Referral Programs”. The passion, energy and commitment that you have all shown in voicing your protests to these cuts are vital to this reversal.

ECEBC wants you to keep in mind the following points as we consider next steps:

- Less than a year ago the Ministry for Children and Family Development told all 45 CCRR Programs to move to accessible, larger and barrier free locations and to negotiate leases for these buildings, vans, and photocopiers. These changes, of course increased monthly overhead which was accommodated with the funding provided.
- With this budget decrease of \$5 million, some programs will not be able to maintain the higher overhead costs and will be forced to reduce staff hours, lose staff or perhaps be forced to close their doors anyway.
- Minister of State for Child Care, Linda Reid’s announcement on January 5 already had a significant impact on CCRR programs with staff being laid off and some programs closing (Richmond).
- The ongoing \$5 million cuts to CCRR programs will still result in programs being closed, although the Ministry has not yet announced which ones.
- Perhaps the most difficult of all to understand – What was the point of putting our field and the CCRR programs through this disruption and upheaval? This is, at the very least very poor management of child care dollars and one wonders at the motivations of such thoughtless actions!
- We continue to have huge waiting lists in our programs as the documentary “Kids Can’t Wait” so effectively demonstrated. Our programs are underfunded now before any cuts take place and the Child Care Operating Funding cuts have not been reversed. The implications of these cuts will have devastating effects.
- The Capital funding cuts have not been reversed and the possibilities of new programs are further from reach.
- Minister of State for Childcare, Linda Reid, states that she is maintaining funding for the most vulnerable children by maintaining the subsidy funding and funding to the supported child development program. We ask Minister Reid: “What good are subsidy funds if there are no spaces to

spend them on?” “What good is funding for supported child development if there are no spaces for these children in early learning and childcare programs?” All children are vulnerable and all children lose out with these cuts!

The ECEBC Board believes that our work is not yet done. We must maintain our actions, our pressure and continue to advocate for the children, families and communities throughout our province.

ECEBC has been invited to participate in discussions with various groups/organizations about further steps that will be taken in regards to recent events and we will continue to update branch members as information becomes available to us.

In the meantime, we do have a few suggestions:

- Encourage parents to contact Minister of State for Child Care, Linda Reid, and share their concerns – parents can use the points in this bulletin or access information from the Coalition of Child Care Advocates, Advocacy Forum and BCGEU websites. Minister of State for Child Care, Linda Reid’s number is: 250-386-4865.
- Letters to the editor are powerful and we encourage you to keep this pressure up with a variety of people writing, including families, businesses, municipal representatives and advocates.
- Please remember to share any letters and information with the opposition so that real examples can be presented in the Legislature. Mail to Brian.Kowalski@leg.bc.ca
- In a variety of areas throughout the province, presentations have been made to City Councils and letters of support have been sent to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). This group suggests that it is important to have letters from as many municipalities in the province as possible. The child care shortage and effects of the upcoming cuts will impact communities and local economies in a very significant way and Mayors and councils have been very supportive.
- Mayor John Dooley, of Nelson, recently put the childcare issue at the top of a national meeting of The Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Dooley believes that “it is time to implement a childcare program that will transcend governments so the funding will not be dependent on the political stripes of those in power.” This group supported a motion to write a letter in support of the federal childcare legislation –Early Learning and Child Care Act, Bill C303. For more information, please refer to page 8 of your Winter, 2007 ECEBC Journal.
- Stay tuned for more ideas about ‘Bridging for Child Care’ at the end of the week!