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AVAILABILITY Press release in html [2] Child care plan webpage [3]

Text of the press release:

Nova Scotians now have an opportunity to help improve the child care system in the province.

Parents, guardians, representatives of the child-care sector and other community members are being encouraged to participate in consultations on a new five-year plan for child care.

"We have been meeting with sector representatives and need to hear from families and other Nova Scotians before moving forward on a plan to strengthen child care in our province," said Community Services Minister David Morse. "It's critical that new supports address the needs of families, particularly people who need child care so they can work and go to school. It's vital that they have a say during the planning process."

In May 2005 the provincial and federal governments signed a five-year \$137-million plan to strengthen Nova Scotia's child-care system. Improvements introduced under previous federal-provincial agreements have included new spaces at licensed child-care centres, higher child-care subsidies, funding to increase the salaries of child-care staff, and more subsidized child-care spaces.

Nova Scotians can share their ideas on how government can best direct the new investments in child care by completing a survey, leaving a voice-mail message on a toll-free line, sending an e-mail, or writing a letter.

Copies of the survey will soon be available at child-care and family resource centres, and can also be obtained by contacting a Department of Community Services office or on the website.

Parents and others who wish to provide their comments can also do so by: voice-mail message on a toll-free line, 1-866-367-4531, by email at nschildcareplan@gov.ns.ca [4], or by regular mail to Department of Community Services, P.O. Box 696, 5675 Spring Garden Rd., Halifax, N.S., B3J 2T7.

All comments must be received by Sept. 30.

The consultations will also include six sessions with parents and four with individuals in the field of early childhood education. To register for one of these sessions, interested Nova Scotians can phone 1-866-367-4530. Meetings are also being held with other interested groups, including training institutions and community organizations.

"This is an important time for child care in our province, as we plan for the largest ever new investment in child care in Nova Scotia," said Mr. Morse. "Our goal is to work toward continually improving the quality and accessibility of care, providing important supports to families while helping children get the best start in life."

Related link: Consultation and survey information [5]

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