

Child care demonstration attracts 400 [CA-BC] ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

Christie Roome knows how difficult it is to find quality, affordable child care in Victoria.

That's why she was at the legislature yesterday, protest sign in hand and 11-month-old Corbin sitting happily in a harness on her back.

"I'm very fortunate to have found child care, but it was a fight to get it," Roome said as she stood among about 400 protesters angry over what they said is a lack of commitment to child care and early-childhood education by both the federal and provincial governments.

The child-care protest was one of three staged during yesterday's throne speech.

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All together, there were about 500 protesters along the front and sides of metal barricades that separated them from the dignitaries as Lt.-Gov. Iona Campagnolo received a thundering military salute.

The voices calling for child care were the loudest. Roome, who has helped found a group called Parents for Child Care, said she got just one call back after applying to 21 day cares to take her child.

She said closure of the Victoria Child Care Resource and Referral program due to B.C. funding cuts will make it even more difficult for parents.

"The resource centre not only provides us with lists, but they provide us with the security of knowing there are minimum standards set for the protection and safety of our children," she said.

Sarah McClure, an early-childhood educator with Beacon Gardens Early Childhood Centre, said the centre has had to close its program to toddlers because it can't find qualified staff.

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- reprinted from the Victoria Times- Colonist

Region: Canada ^[2]

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