Child care cuts will ripple down [CA-BC]

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Format: Article

Publication Date: 31 Jan 2007

AVAILABILITY See text below.

EXCERPTS

I am writing this letter in response to B.C. Minister of State for Childcare Linda Reid's letter in the Trail Daily Times on Jan. 16 (B.C. Still Cares About Kids: Minister).

Does B.C. care about our kids? Minister Reid states that the provincial government's goal is to "create a quality, flexible child-care system that works for B.C. families, that supports our most vulnerable children and is sustainable over the long term."

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The closure of all 45 CCRR programs across the province, slated for Oct. 1, is devastating news to child-care workers and families who depend on these services. There will be NO child-care referrals for parents looking for child care.

For child-care providers there will be NO training, monitoring, accountability, administrative support, assistance in managing the business or dealing with difficult child-care issues. There will also be NO criminal record checks, reference checks, medical release, first aid training or support for this important group of workers.

For parents, there will be NO support or assistance filling out the extensive child-care subsidy applications. There will be NO toy and resource lending library including affordable art supplies, NO parent education, NO CCRR play groups or mom, dad and me programs. There will also be a huge LOSS of staff expertise in the child-care field and a loss of input from this staff to early childhood community development.

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The provincial CCRR's year-end report states that in the 2005/06 fiscal year, 32,657 parents received referrals to local child-care services; 3,727 parents attended training opportunities; 48,566 parents borrowed or were supplied with resources and 48,222 parents received consultations.

Also in this year, 16,506 care providers attended training opportunities, 105,129 borrowed toys and resources, 208,693 received consultations and 599 previously unmonitored caregivers were registered with the CCRRs. These licence-not-required caregivers were screened, supported and are now eligible for an enhanced child-care subsidy rate.

So let's ask ourselves... does this affect the quality of care children are receiving? You bet it does! Child-care providers are the foundation of our communities. Huge amounts of research has been done on the value of early childhood programs for school readiness, some by the very government who is now choosing to decimate these programs.

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Sue McIntosh, CCRR coordinator Trail

- reprinted from the Trail Daily Times

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