

# Child care cuts hurt B.C.'s future [CA-BC]<sup>[1]</sup>

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## EXCERPTS

British Columbia has every right to be irked by the Harper's government fumbling on child care, especially its decision to renege on a five-year funding commitment.

But it's wrong and unwise to claim that the province's only option is to slash support for child care by \$150 million a year, with the cuts to begin in April.

B.C. has the money to maintain its important child-care commitments even without Ottawa's contribution.

And it has the evidence -- including a recent report from the B.C. Progress Board -- to demonstrate that investing in child care, especially for those in greatest need, will pay significant future dividends.

The problem begins with the federal Conservatives. The former Liberal government signed five-year child-care agreements with the provinces in 2005. For B.C., the program was worth \$630 million over five years.

But the campaigning Conservatives vowed to kill the deal. Instead, they would provide \$100 per month to parents for each child under six.

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Now B.C., blaming the cancellation of federal funding, has cut its commitment to child care by about one-third.

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The theory is that the \$100 federal child credit will cover their costs. The reality is that for many families that money is already committed.

Linda Reid, the minister responsible, notes the province has focused on maintaining support for about 25,000 low-income families -- those earning less than \$38,000 -- in making the cuts. That's important. But even for those families, provincial support is far below the amount spent in 2001.

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The federal government's policy change has created the problem.

But Reid's claim that B.C. can't afford to pay for needed child care isn't credible. Over the next three years the government is forecasting surpluses of more than \$6 billion.

...

British Columbians should pressure Ottawa to return to a real child-care policy.

And at the same time the province -- with or without federal help -- should rethink plans to slash its investment in our children and our future.

- reprinted from the Victoria Times-Colonist

**Region:** Canada<sup>[2]</sup>

British Columbia<sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** funding<sup>[4]</sup>

federal programs<sup>[5]</sup>

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**Links**

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