

Future of childcare subsidies unclear after June [CA-BC]^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Early child-care advocates and parents in B.C. can be assured subsidies will continue until the end of this school year. After that, doubt and fear take over.

"We have assurance until the end of March," Mary Dolan said. "What happens at the end of June?"

Minister of State for Child Care Linda Reid sent a letter to all child-care providers in the province earlier this month assuring the current Child Care Subsidy Program will continue to the end of the school year.

In September 2005 the province increased the subsidy threshold from \$21,000 to \$38,000 due to federal funding, but a cancellation of the federal early learning and childcare agreement followed the election, cutting \$455 million to B.C. in federal funding.

In its place the federal government is giving families \$100 a month per child under age six, in addition to incentives valued at \$10,000 for newly created child-care spaces.

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Dolan says there are better systems across the country than B.C.'s way of delivering childcare funding, pointing to Quebec as a leader.

"Parents can't pay \$600, \$700, \$800 per month for child care. It's like another mortgage," Dolan said.

"In Quebec they pay \$140. I'd like to see B.C. look to the Quebec model, make changes and become a leader in child care."

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Dolan is encouraging parents to contact B.C.'s committee on finance and government as it consults on issues for the 2007 budget.

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- reprinted from the Vancouver Island News Group

Region: Canada^[2]

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