

Groups fear Tory plan [CA-BC] ^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Local child-care advocates say the federal Conservative government needs to spell out plans to replace the program introduced by its Liberal predecessor.

Vi-Anne Zirnhelt, executive director of the Children's Circle Daycare Society, said Monday she is not opposed to the Tory proposal of a lump sum, \$1,200 payment to parents of children but wants to see the existing program maintained.

"Basically, the national child-care program, that's a matter of trust," Zirnhelt said. "This was signed and we're asking (Prime Minister Stephen Harper) to honour it. What we're saying is keep the agreement in place as well."

Zirnhelt, who also serves as chairwoman of the area branch of the Early Childhood Educators of B.C., was asked to respond to a study on the issue prepared by YWCA Canada.

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Val Janz, general manager of Make Children First, a community initiative promoting healthy development of children, said the Tory proposal is aimed at making a child-care subsidy more widely accessible. The Tory plan will benefit stay-at-home parents as well as those in the workforce.

However, the proposed sum would represent only a fraction of the actual cost, especially when it comes to infant care, which is the most costly.

"One hundred dollars a month will do nothing, particularly if we're encouraging women to get back into the workforce," Janz said.

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- reprinted from the Kamloops Daily News

Region: Canada ^[2]

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