

# Advocate says B.C. dithering on child care: Government accused of lacking any plan to use federal funding [CA-BC] <sup>[1]</sup>

**Author:** Rud, Jeff

**Source:** Victoria Times-Colonist

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 12 Aug 2005

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

The B.C. government has yet to prove it has a proper plan to use more than \$600 million in federal child care money it will receive over the next five years, says a spokeswoman for a provincial advocacy group.

Sharon Gregson, of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C., said the province is in "dire need" of such a plan and she worries that the opportunity provided by the federal cash will be wasted because the B.C. government is unprepared.

Gregson made the comments on Thursday, one day after an announcement of \$8.1 million in new child care funding from the province.

"I think it's very disappointing that ... the best that Minister of State Linda Reid can put forward is \$8 million in one-time-only funding and put out a request for proposals [for new projects] when what this province is in dire need of is a child care plan on how we're going to move forward over the next five years to create a system," Gregson said in an interview.

Recent statistics show that more than 70 per cent of B.C. women work but there are only regulated child care spots for between 10 and 12 per cent of children 12 and under, Gregson said. "That leaves a huge gap."

Reid defended the government's record, saying not all families need child care. Only 42 per cent of B.C. children are cared for by somebody other than their parent, she said.

"Since June of 2001, we have funded 91 major projects for the construction and renovation of child care centres and have created 2,100 new licensed group child care facilities," Reid said. "So we're making progress."

Of Gregson's complaints, Reid added: "I don't think they've kept pace with the progress we've made. And she's also made no attempt to contact me."

Reid said that since the Liberal government took power in 2001, it has boosted the number of regulated day-care spaces that receive funding to 77,000 from 45,000.

But Gregson said these numbers are misleading because the province is simply giving less money to fund more spaces. She said the Liberal government has cut its overall funding to child care dramatically since 2001.

When asked whether government is putting less money into each child care space in the province, Reid said: "I don't know if that's true. I don't think so."

The minister said the province's plan for the federal money will be unveiled after a formal agreement is announced with Ottawa, likely in early September.

Gregson is skeptical.

"My worry is that [the money] won't be put toward building a system that meets the needs of the children and families of this province."

- reprinted from the Victoria Times-Colonist

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

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

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

funding <sup>[5]</sup>

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accused-lacking-any

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/05/08/advocate-says-bc-dithering-child-care-government-accused-lacking-any> [2]

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