

Funding not enough: city: Council questions province's commitment to child care [CA-BC] ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

A \$33-million infusion into child care in B.C. isn't enough to satisfy Burnaby city council.

Councillors questioned the provincial government's commitment to child care after receiving a report from the city's social issues committee at a meeting last month. That report notes that, in late October, the province announced an additional \$33 million in child care funding for the remainder of the 2004/05 fiscal year and the 2005/06 fiscal year.

Of that money, \$28 million is targeted to the province's child care subsidy program. A provincial press release in October noted that the income level at which families become eligible for subsidies has risen and supplements have been increased for those with special needs.

At the time, Stan Hagen, minister of children and family development, said the boost will help to create a stable, sustainable child care system.

But Coun. Dan Johnston said the province is in large part reinstating money it cut. A city staff report notes that the income threshold is now \$15 per month higher than it was in 2001 when budget cuts were made.

Johnston called the announcement "smoke and mirrors," noting that funding for the increase came, in part, from \$49 million to be transferred from the federal government to the province.

Coun. Pietro Calendino said the province doesn't seem committed to a long-term policy for child care.

"In the child care industry, there is still a lot of concern," he said.

"This anxiety has not been relieved."

- reprinted from Burnaby Now

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