

Child care in trouble: Advocacy group [CA-BC]^[1]

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EXCERPTS:

The government's three-year service plan summaries could devastate child care programs and services around the province, according to the Westcoast Child Care Inform, an advocate group for child care in B.C.

The summaries are to be implemented April 1 and will affect, among other things, eligibility for child care subsidy.

"What we're concerned about is that they're going to make these decisions and then 'boom' - a family is going to go in for, say, child care subsidy, and they're no longer going to be eligible," says Jacquie Ennik, an early childhood educator at UNBC Childcare and a board member with the Early Childhood Educators of B.C. "That has huge ramifications across the board."

The Ministry of Human Resources, which Ennik said is one of three key ministries in the child care field, will be lowering the income testing thresholds, which means fewer families will be eligible for full or partial subsidy to assist with monthly child-care costs.

As well, the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services will, over the next three years, be reducing grants to numerous non-profit organizations. For instance, as of April 2004, provincial funding will no longer be provided to 40 child-care resource and referral programs around B.C.

"These changes will have a substantial effect, not only on families right now who are needing child care, but also for their children and for their employers' employees," Ennik said. "And it has huge economic and societal impacts."

Ennik said many families may not be aware of the service-plan summaries, which can be found at www.gov.bc.ca^[2].

She encourages people to write the government and their local MLAs to voice any concerns regarding the cutbacks, and "to say kids are important."

reprinted from The Prince George Citizen.

Region: British Columbia^[3]

Tags: subsidy^[4]

funding^[5]

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