

B.C. child-care wage campaign [CA-BC] ^[1]

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See text below.

EXCERPTS

Tired of waiting for the provincial government to help increase their wages, B.C.'s child-care workers are asking their employers for starting wages of \$20 an hour.

Currently, 35 percent of licensed group workers make between \$13 and \$15 an hour. Another 28 percent make \$16 to \$18 an hour. According to Sheila Davidson, the executive director of Early Childhood Educators of B.C., the industry is plagued by recruitment and retention problems.

While Davidson told the Georgia Straight that the professional association's campaign is not meant to burden parents, they may ultimately foot the bill. The ECEBC is encouraging early childhood educators to ask for more money. The boards and bosses then have to figure out where to get it from, Davidson said.

"We can't subsidize parent fees anymore," Davidson said in a phone interview today (April 7). "Parents should not have to pay, and this is not about us and them.... The worst thing is this is going to hurt some families. Some can't afford higher fees. But we can stay where we have been for 35 years, or we can say, 'This is what I'm worth as a professional.'"

The best-case scenario for the ECEBC would see parents step up and force the government to properly fund childcare. That could, and should, take 10 years, Davidson said, if it were to create a well-thought-out system.

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For the May 12 provincial election, Davidson said concerned citizens should vote for a party that articulates a vision for early childhood learning, and has a concrete plan. Plus, that plan should be legislated, she said. Any plan should include childcare that is affordable, high quality, and accessible, she said.

"I'm PO'd that all the infrastructure stimulus does nothing for women and children," Davidson said. "Build childcare. Women pay billion and billions in taxes. They deserve something for it."

- reprinted from the Georgia Straight

Region: British Columbia ^[2]

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