

# Special needs kids may lose taxpayer-funded daycare [CA-BC]<sup>[1]</sup>

Downtown Eastside child care centre says it can't afford the rent

**Author:** Tomlinson, Kathy

**Source:** CBC News

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 18 Aug 2009

## AVAILABILITY

See text below.

## EXCERPTS

An agency that operates a non-profit daycare in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside says it can no longer afford to keep enough staff to care for the troubled, disadvantaged children it was set up to help.

The Phil Bouvier Family Centre attributes its problems to \$4,000-a-month rent - charged by a charitable foundation that owns the building - and the recent loss of some short-term provincial funding.

"It's a perfect storm, said Sabine Tanasiuk, child care co-ordinator for the Phil Bouvier Centre. "At the end of August, three staff will leave - and the children will just have their minimal needs met."

The Phil Bouvier Family Centre opened in June 2008 on Princess Avenue in Strathcona. It was partly funded with almost \$2 million of provincial and city taxpayer money and has spaces for 49 children. According to Tanasiuk, 200 more children are currently on the waiting list.

She said it was intended to fill a desperate need for quality child care in B.C.'s poorest neighborhood - where most parents can't afford to pay full fees and children often have special needs, which require extra staff.

Tanasiuk said the majority of children who attend the center were born to parents with drug or alcohol problems, and many live in with poverty and violence. She said they are the children other daycares can't or won't accept.

...

The Phil Bouvier Family Centre was a project taken on by the Central City Foundation (CCF), which owns the building that houses the daycare and other services for families. It was spearheaded by Phil Bouvier, the foundation's former executive director, who died in 2006.

The CCF paid \$1.69 million to purchase and renovate the building; the city and the province contributed \$1.77 million.

The foundation then leased the building to the Vancouver Native Health Society (VNHS) for \$48,000 per year rent - to run a "hub" of services for families that would include child care. VNHS in turn arranged for the Ray-Cam Co-operative Centre to run the daycare.

Correspondence shows that the native health society is billing Ray-Cam \$65,000 a year - to cover the daycare's rent, maintenance and utilities. No one from VNHS returned phone calls from CBC News.

...

Tanasiuk said when Phil Bouvier was the executive director of CCF, there was no indication the daycare would pay any rent.

...

"Central City Foundation is very proud of the investment we made in the Phil Bouvier Centre and continue to make in this center," said foundation CEO Jennifer Johnstone.

Johnstone stressed \$48,000 is a modest annual return on donors' investment in the building, which allows the foundation to fund other worthy projects. She also said the Phil Bouvier Family Centre is getting a heavily subsidized rent, because the building could be rented for three times that much.

...

Sharon Gregson, a trustee with the Vancouver Board of Education and vocal child-care advocate, pointed out many non-profit daycares in schools or community centres pay much less for rent, some as little as \$1 per year.

However, Gregson said the centre's money problems should also be blamed on a lack of provincial money for child care, which affects many daycares.

"The situation at the Phil Bouvier Centre is a tragically clear example of the larger systemic child care crisis across British Columbia," said Gregson.

"Due to the government's apparent determination not to provide adequate, stable operating funds, many, if not all, child-care programs are struggling to meet their daily expenses and are particularly challenged in their ability to provide appropriate services for the children who need extra support."

Mary Polak, B.C.'s minister responsible for Child Care, wrote to the Phil Bouvier Family Centre operators in July, stating the province already contributed \$1 million to CCF for the building - and recent funding for extra staff was only temporary.

- reprinted from CBC News

**Region:** British Columbia <sup>[2]</sup>

**Tags:** funding <sup>[3]</sup>

special needs <sup>[4]</sup>

---

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/09/11/special-needs-kids-may-lose-taxpayer-funded-daycare-ca-bc>

#### Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/09/11/special-needs-kids-may-lose-taxpayer-funded-daycare-ca-bc> [2]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/special-needs>