

Report outlines dismal child-care poverty rates in B.C. ^[1]

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EXCERPTS

Frances Stone is a single mother who has to find time for three kids in elementary school and works part time to ensure her children's milk doesn't have to be watered down to make it last.

Life wasn't always this good.

Living in Surrey four years ago, the 38-year-old was stuck at home, surviving on welfare and disability benefits with an inability to get more work shifts without paying for pricey day care.

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According to the 2013 Child Poverty Report Card released by First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, the province currently has the worst child poverty rate Canada-wide at 18.6%.

That number skyrockets to 49.8% of children living in single-mother families.

Stone was lucky because she managed to find help through subsidized child care at a Burnaby community school - where liaisons connected her to ministry funding - and can now work several days a week.

The report card authors have previously called for \$10-a-day child care, but the group's provincial co-ordinator Adrienne Montani said Victoria instead implemented a tax benefit program for 2015 that would mean a \$660 rebate per year.

"That doesn't buy a lot of child care," she said, adding families without the care would be stuck in a cycle of being unable to work.

The report, which can be found at firstcallbc.org, calls for an indexing of minimum wages and welfare rates, and an extension of maternity leave periods, among other funding changes.

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- reprinted from 24 Hours Vancouver

Region: British Columbia ^[2]

Tags: poverty ^[3]

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