

Child care is a human right: Solving the childcare crisis ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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EXCERPTS

We're passionate about women's and children's rights, and concerned about the rights of mothers and young children to access high-quality, affordable child care. While the B.C. Human Rights Code intends "to foster a society ... in which there are no impediments to full and free participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of British Columbia," (p. 17) the current crisis in child care in B.C. is denying full and free participation to mothers in the labour force and their young children.

However, without "an advocate for the public interest in the elimination of discrimination" (p. 10) since the dismantling of the Human Rights Commission in 2002, there is no institutional voice to raise public awareness about the commitments that Canada and B.C. have made to women's and children's rights, and in particular the right of families with young children.

We are players in the suite of actors that Brodsky and Day identify as necessary to implement an effective human rights system (p. 21-22), and we -- and our movement -- have experienced the effects of this lack of institutional leadership. Rather than starting from a place where we can advocate for changes to make an established system more equitable, we are forced to advocate for the right to access a system that doesn't even exist. Although three-quarters of mothers are in the paid labour force, there are only enough childcare spaces for about 18 per cent of B.C. children. Childcare parent fees are higher than university tuition, and wages for college-trained early childhood educators are low.

Of course, we have a solution -- the \$10 a day Child Care Plan. As a steward "of human rights jurisprudence with a responsibility to advance robust interpretations of human rights legislation that would ensure its responsiveness" (p. 9), a Human Rights Commission in B.C. could help us move from crisis to solution by raising public awareness about our right to child care. In so doing, the Commission would also help the B.C. Human Rights Code move from aspiration to reality.

Lynell and Melanie Anderson are actively involved in the childcare advocacy movement. Lynell is also a CCPA Research Associate and Melanie is pursuing a career in Constitutional and Human Rights Law.

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This blog post is part of a series on human rights, based on the new report *Strengthening Human Rights: Why British Columbia Needs a Human Rights Commission*. ^[3] Find other blogs in the series here ^[4].

Region: British Columbia ^[5]

Tags: gender ^[6]

children's rights ^[7]

mother's labour force participation ^[8]

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Links

^[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/14/12/child-care-human-right-solving-childcare-crisis> ^[2]

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