

COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: CHILD CARE SERVICES IN BC: A COMMON AGENDA AND VISION

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council be asked to notify the Coalition of Child Care Advocation of BC of its support in principle for the agenda set forth in the document, *Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision*.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Child Care Resource Group.

REPORT

The Community Issues and Social Planning Committee at its meeting held on 1999 November 24, received and adopted the attached report responding to the Committee 's request for a report providing information and recommendations regarding the document, *Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision*.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow
Vice Chair

<p>: COPY - CITY MANAGER - DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES - DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING</p>
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TO: CHAIR & MEMBERS
COMMUNITY ISSUES AND SOCIAL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

1999 November 15

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

Our File: 17.315.1

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE SERVICES IN BC: A COMMON AGENDA AND VISION

PURPOSE: To respond to the Committee's request for a report providing information and recommendations regarding the document, *Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision*.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council be asked to notify the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC of its support in principle for the agenda set forth in the document, *Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision*.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the Child Care Resources Group.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 1999 September 22, the Community Issues & Social Planning Committee (CISPC) received a copy of the document *Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision* (see Appendix 1, *attached*). The Committee's representative on the Child Care Resources Group indicated that the group had expressed a desire that the City formally endorse the document.

To help it in determining an appropriate response, the CISPC asked for a staff report on the document. This report responds to that request.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENT

Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision, published in 1999 June, was prepared by a coalition of six BC child care organizations. While the six organizations have their own distinct mandates and priorities, they were united in their mutual concern over the future of child care in the province. They were also united by the belief that they would need to work collectively if their vision was to be realized.

The *Common Agenda and Vision* document cites research that indicates:

- public support for increased public spending on child care.
- a quantifiable cost-benefit to society from spending on high quality child care services (i.e., for every \$1 spent, a \$2 benefit to parents, children, and society; Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998).
- social benefits from high quality child care (e.g., enhanced early brain development, improved long term health outcomes for children receiving quality care in early childhood).

The document also identifies various trends and initiatives that lend encouragement to its vision. For example, at the national level, the new Social Union provides an opportunity for all senior governments to cooperate on a national child care program. At the provincial level, the Province of Quebec has initiated a comprehensive universal child care program. Also, provincial child care organizations from throughout Canada have joined forces in their advocacy efforts, bolstering their cases through use of the above-noted research on the economic and social benefits of quality care in early childhood.

Having “set the stage” through reference to child care research and initiatives, the document puts forward a seven-point child care agenda. To summarize, the agenda calls for the following:

- ensuring all children have access to quality early childhood experiences and programs.
- honouring and respecting the diversity of BC’s children, families, and communities.
- placing child care within a comprehensive family policy.
- ensuring families have choices regarding child care programs.
- expanding public responsibility for child care beyond a targeted approach (i.e., moving towards more universal programs).
- providing a new, comprehensive funding approach for child care services.
- moving child care from the current user fee system to one that is funded through the tax system.

3.0 DISCUSSION

The thrust of the *Common Agenda and Vision* document’s agenda is consistent with the Burnaby Child Care Policy. The first four elements, in particular, echo policy statements included in the City’s Policy. The remaining three elements, while not specifically reflecting Burnaby’s policy statements, are in keeping with the Policy’s vision for child care. Further, if addressed, the agenda elements would significantly improve the child care prospects for Burnaby children and families.

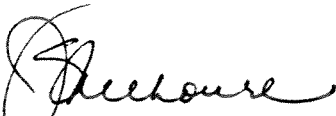
It is worth noting that child care policy questions are currently gaining considerable attention from senior governments. For example, the Federal Government recently released a "children's budget" and is gauging public sentiment on the prospect of increased spending on children and youth. Through the Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security, the Provincial Government has issued a discussion paper entitled *Building a Better Future for British Columbia's Kids*. The paper identifies a range of child care program options, spelling out the costs and benefits of each. Implementation of the options would require commitment from all levels of government, employers, labour, and society as a whole. The key requirement, however, would be for the Federal Government to establish a national child care program - a commitment made in the Liberal Party's 1993 Red Book and the focus of a 1997 Burnaby resolution through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has responded to the CISPC's request for information on the document, *Child Care Services in BC: A Common Agenda and Vision*. It concludes that the thrust of the agenda put forward in the *Common Agenda and Vision* document is consistent with the Burnaby Child Care Policy, and that senior governments are currently gauging public opinion regarding increased child care spending.

The financial costs of realizing the agenda put forward in the *Common Agenda and Vision* document's agenda would be significant. As the research indicates, the financial and social benefits would also be significant. Indeed, having done its own economic assessment, the Vancouver Board of Trade is calling upon the Federal Government to establish a national child care program.

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that Council be asked to notify the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC of its support in principle for the document's agenda. It is also recommended that a copy of this report be sent to the Child Care Resources Group.


D.G. Stenson, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF/sla
Attachment

cc: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

Where's the "Good News" in Advancing this Vision?

Today, there are some promising trends and initiatives that support our vision.

At the national level, the new Social Union provides a renewed opportunity for the federal/provincial/territorial governments to cooperate on a child care program for all of Canada's children.

At the provincial level, advocacy groups for children and youth identify early childhood care and education as a fundamental "key to success" in ensuring the well-being of our children.

And, the province of Quebec has embarked on a landmark family policy which will provide, by the year 2002, a regulated, non-profit child care space for every child under the age of 5 at a minimal cost to parents.

Taking Action!

We encourage you to:

- share this vision and agenda in your community
- make this vision and agenda a priority in your work
- Have your organization endorse this brochure
- let your local, provincial and federal politicians know that you are counting on them to act!

If you want to endorse this document or if you have questions, please contact us c/o Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC
3rd Floor, 210 West Broadway
Vancouver BC V5Y 3W2

Tel (604) 709-5661/Fax (604) 709-5662

Support for this brochure gratefully received from Status of Women Canada, B.C./ Yukon Division

This brochure has been endorsed by:

Who are the organizations endorsing this document?

BC ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES is an association of child care employers from across BC.

COALITION OF CHILD CARE ADVOCATES OF BC is a voluntary organization working for a non-profit child care system that is high quality, affordable, accessible, publicly funded and accountable.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS OF BC is the professional association for early childhood educators in BC.

SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF BC is a province-wide organization offering a support and communication for the school age child care field.

WESTCOAST CHILD CARE RESOURCE CENTRE enhances and supports the delivery of child care services in Vancouver and throughout British Columbia through a variety of programs, projects and services.

WESTERN CANADA FAMILY CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION OF BC's mission is to promote, support and advocate for quality, inclusive family child care.

Child Care Services in BC A Common Agenda & Vision

June 1995

This document is endorsed by:

B.C. Association of Child Care Services
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.
Early Childhood Educators of B.C.
School Age Child Care Association of B.C.
Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
Western Canada Family Child Care Association

BC is well served by several dynamic, provincial membership-based child care organizations, each with its own mandate and priorities. Over the last few years, many of these organizations have come to see that we share some "common ground". In March 1999, representatives from six organizations met to affirm our commitment to a collective voice for child care. While we recognized the importance of working on our own priorities, we all agreed that without a common vision for child care, few of our long-term goals are achievable. We all share responsibility for advancing our common beliefs.

What are Child Care Services?

Child care services describe a broad array of programs and services that facilitate the growth and development of all children.

These include:

- ▶ full and part-time programs for children from birth to 12 years of age
- ▶ centre, family and in-home care
- ▶ family resource and support programs
- ▶ programs that support the full inclusion of all children and families

And the Child Care Resource and Referral programs that support families and services.

Effective child care services meet the varied needs of families, communities and society. Child care services provide support to parents in their caregiving role, enable families to participate in work and study, contribute to women's capacity for a more equitable role in society and are part of a strategy to address societal concerns such as poverty, isolation and community development.

What is our Child Care Agenda?

We are committed to an agenda that:

1. Entitles all children to access quality early childhood experiences and programs, regardless of their families' economic or employment status.
2. Honours and respects the diversity of B.C.'s children, families and communities.
3. Places child care within a comprehensive family policy which includes extended parental leave and progressive family/work policies.
4. Offers families choices from a range of coordinated, quality child care programs and services.
5. Expands public responsibility for child care beyond a targeted approach.
6. Provides a new, comprehensive funding approach that supports affordable, accountable and financially sustainable child care services, and offers caregivers wages, benefits and working conditions that reflect the value of their work.
7. Moves child care from the current user fee system to one funded, like other public programs, through the tax system.

What Does the Research Say?

Our vision for a quality child care system has been powerfully stated and affirmed in a number of research studies.

- ▶ A 1998 Environics survey of Canadians found that:
 - ▶ **79%** of respondents believe governments should spend more money on child care.
 - ▶ **93%** believe that training must be a requirement for every caregiver.
 - ▶ **81%** agree that caregivers are the most important factor in ensuring quality child care.
- ▶ A cost-benefit analysis of child care in Canada concluded that for every \$1 invested in high quality child care for all children, there is a \$2 benefit to children, parents and society (*The Benefits and Costs of Good Child Care, Cleveland and Krashinsky, 1998*).
- ▶ The most comprehensive study of the child care workforce in Canada, *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration* (1998), points to the need for respect and appropriate remuneration for those who care for our children.

- ▶ Brain development studies tell us that early childhood is the most important time of growth and development in a human's life and that quality child care has long lasting impact on competence, coping skills and human development.
- ▶ Population health studies highlight the importance of positive early childhood experiences in determining healthy outcomes for all areas of children's development.

The case for high quality child care has been well documented and articulated by respected leaders from both inside and outside the child care community.

The needs have been identified:
The challenges and concerns are clear;
The solutions are achievable.

Now, it's time for action!