

CITY OF BURNABY

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SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

RE: CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information.

REPORT

The Social Issues Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2005 January 26, received and adopted the *attached* report providing a summary of activities for the Child Care Resources Group during 2004 and proposing a Workplan for 2005. During 2004, the CCRG focused on two areas: research and advocacy, and information and support. In 2005, the CCRG intends to continue monitoring the impacts of changing senior government child care policies on the local child care sector.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston
Chair

Councillor L. Rankin
Vice Chair

Councillor S. Dhaliwal
Member

COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING
- DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

2005 January 18

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

OUR FILE: 1750 20

SUBJECT: CHILD CARE RESOURCES GROUP UPDATE

PURPOSE: To provide a summary of activities for the Child Care Resources Group during 2004, and to propose a Workplan for 2005.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** this report be received for information.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Child Care Resources Group (CCRG) was established in 1990 as a subcommittee of the Social Issues Committee. It is comprised of representatives from non-profit child care societies operating in Burnaby, as well as representatives from the Fraser Health Authority, the Burnaby School District, relevant Provincial ministries, and relevant City departments. At this time, the Social Issues Committee is also represented on the CCRG by Brian Nasu.

As outlined in its Terms of Reference, the mandate of the CCRG is to:

- serve as an advisory body to the Social Issues Committee on child care matters;
- assist with the development of Burnaby child care policies, services, and programs; and
- act as an advocate for child care services and programs in Burnaby.

In accordance with Burnaby's Child Care Policy, the CCRG has prepared periodic update reports on its activities for the Committee and Council. Six reports have been prepared to date. This report provides an overview of activities during 2004, and summarizes priorities for the CCRG for 2005.

2.0 KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2004

Recent activities of the CCRG have focused on two main areas: research and advocacy, and information and support.

2.1 Research and Advocacy

Child care advocates contend that changes to Provincial legislation, programs and funding pertaining to child care over the past three years have rendered the child care system extremely fragile, and left many parents in a state of confusion and frustration. Thus, a primary focus for the CCRG in 2004 was to monitor the impact of the changes on parents and child care providers in Burnaby. Members of the CCRG appeared before the Social Issues Committee in 2004 March to present information on the state of child care in Burnaby. As a follow-up, CCRG members assisted staff with the preparation of a report to the Social Issues Committee and Council in 2004 October on the status of public spending on child care in British Columbia and in Canada. Council adopted the recommendations of the report, which were to urge the Federal government to develop and implement a national child care strategy, and to highlight to the Province the need for: a) increased Provincial expenditure on child care and b) the establishment of a universal, publicly-funded child care system in British Columbia. As well, as they are able, member organizations of the CCRG have been assisting parents and child care providers who have been negatively affected by the Provincial changes (e.g., adjusting fees, reducing staff salaries and benefits).

2.2 Information and Support

The CCRG presentation to the Social Issues Committee in 2004 March was the catalyst for an invitation to Dr. Clyde Hertzman of the Human Early Learning Partnership at UBC to present his recent research on early childhood development to the Committee. In 2004 September, Dr. Hertzman provided the Committee with the results of research conducted through the Burnaby School District in 2003 on the school-readiness of Burnaby kindergarten children. School-readiness was measured using an Early Development Instrument (EDI) or checklist, which was completed by kindergarten teachers for each child in their class. The EDI measures a child's development in five areas including physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development, and communications skills and general knowledge. Comparative information on kindergarten children in the whole province and in the Greater Vancouver region was provided as well. Dr. Hertzman also provided insights into policy implications of his research findings. The School District, City, and other local organizations are currently reviewing the EDI information. These groups will use the information, in conjunction with Burnaby's Community Asset Mapping System data, as a resource for future planning efforts.

To highlight the importance of quality child care to the community, the CCRG requested that the City of Burnaby celebrate Child Care Month (May 2004) by issuing an official proclamation of the month in Burnaby. Council made the proclamation on 2004 May 3.

3.0 THE YEAR AHEAD

Child care advocates contend that over the past three years, Provincial government changes to child care programs and funding have limited the access of many families to quality child care, and fueled significant instability and anxiety in the child care system. Thus, a key thrust of the CCRG's work in the year ahead is expected to be research and advocacy and, in particular, continued monitoring of the impacts of Provincial policy changes on the local child care sector. The CCRG is likely to also focus on developments at the Federal level, particularly with respect to government promises regarding the establishment of a national child care strategy.

In addition to its research and advocacy efforts, the CCRG will also continue to pursue its information and support function. The CCRG hopes to sponsor a number of activities during Child Care Month in May 2005 to highlight the role that child care plays in supporting families and communities, and to raise awareness of the importance of early childhood development initiatives and a stable child care system. These activities could include articles in local newspapers¹ or the hanging of Child Care Month banners from pedestrian overpasses.

As well, the CCRG will complete the revision of the *Child Care Planning Resource Package*. The original *Package*, which was developed in 1999, contains information aimed at assisting groups and individuals with the planning and development of child care facilities in Burnaby (e.g., information on population characteristics, child care supply, issues and priorities, funding programs, and key contacts.) The revised package will be similar in scope and will be made available to the community in hard copy and on the City's website

As the year progresses, the members of the CCRG may identify other activities for resolving a range of child care issues in Burnaby. However, the CCRG will seek the prior approval of the Social Issues Committee for any major activities it wishes to undertake in 2005, including plans for Child Care Month.

More detail on the CCRG's planned activities for the year ahead can be found in its proposed 2005 Workplan, *attached* as Appendix 1.

¹ Newspaper articles could focus on the status of child care waitlists and fees in Burnaby, on how can parents can assess the quality of care their children are receiving, or on the value and importance of a stable child care system.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This report has provided an overview of the CCRG's key activities during 2004 and outlined proposed activities for the Group for the year ahead. During 2004, the CCRG focused on two areas: research and advocacy, and information and support. This year, the CCRG intends to continue monitoring the impacts of changing senior government child care policies on the local child care sector. Other priorities include developing plans for Child Care Month, revising the outdated *Child Care Planning Resource Package*, and examining strategies to address a number of concerns about the child care situation in Burnaby. The CCRG will keep the Social Issues Committee apprised of its activities.

This report is provided for the Committee's information.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JS:sa/sla
Attachment

cc: City Manager
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services

Burnaby Child Care Resources Group (CCRG)

Proposed 2005 Work Program

Mandate (as outlined in CCRG Terms of Reference) :

- to serve as an advisory body to the Social Issues Committee on child care policies, services, and programs;
- to assist with the development of Burnaby child care policies, services and programs; and
- to act as an advocate for child care services and programs in Burnaby.

Objectives for 2005:

- 1) to monitor changes in the child care environment at the Provincial and Federal levels, and to provide advice to the Social Issues Committee and Council on such;
- 2) to examine strategies to address concerns about a shortage of qualified child care providers;
- 3) to examine strategies to overcome difficulties in securing and maintaining space for child care programs in Burnaby;
- 4) to examine strategies to overcome difficulties in securing operating funds for child care centres and programs in Burnaby; and
- 5) to examine strategies to support the expansion of out-of-school care or other alternatives for “latch key kids” in Burnaby.

Specific Activities:

- 1) Revise all remaining components of the *Child Care Planning Resource Package* and make available in hard copy and on City website; and
- 2) Sponsor awareness-raising events during Child Care Month in May 2005 (e.g., articles on child care in local newspapers, banners hung from pedestrian overpasses, information on status of child care waitlists and fees in Burnaby, information on the value and importance of child care and a stable child care system).